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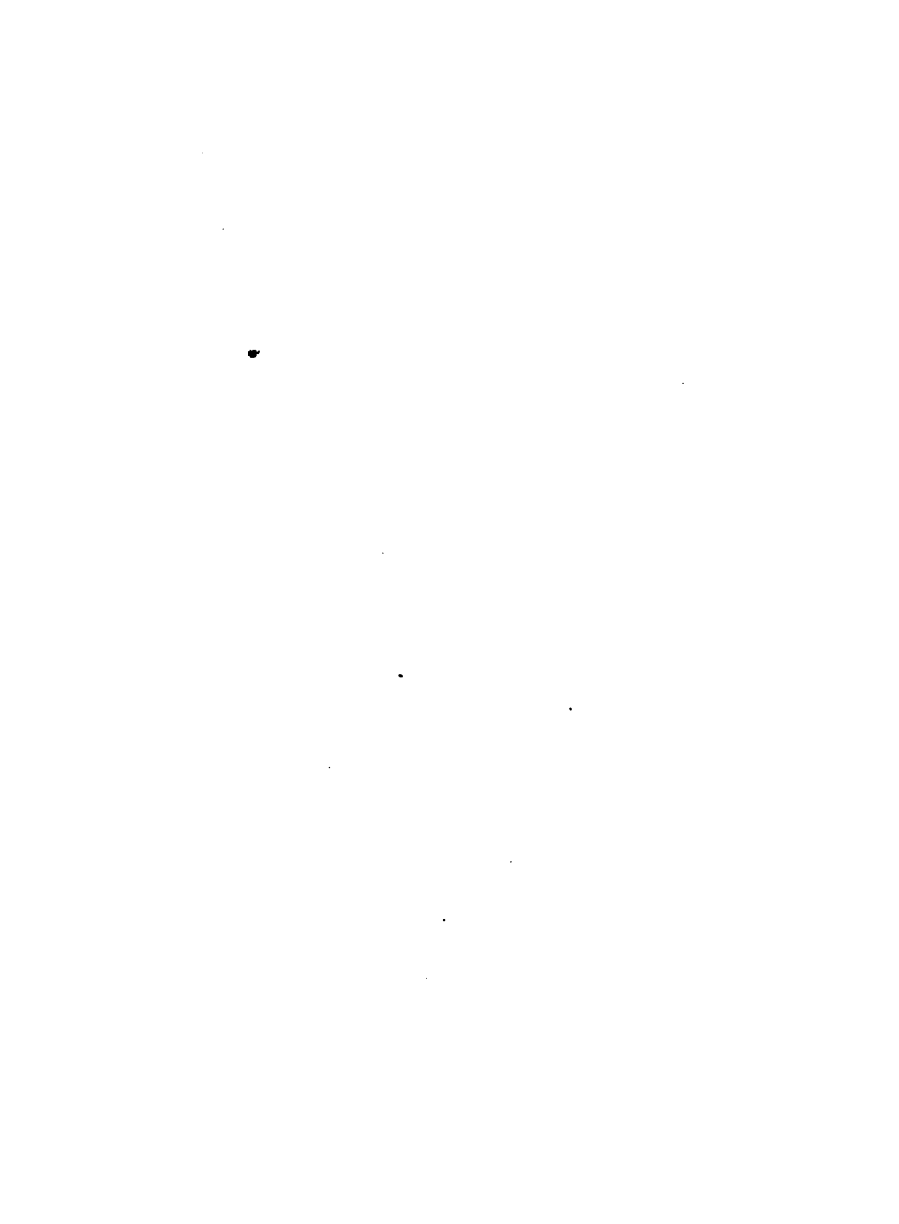
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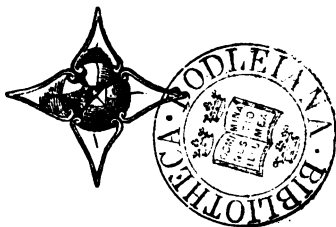


ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, NEAR CANTERBURY.

SIMPLE SKETCHES
FROM
Church History

FOR
YOUNG PERSONS.

By MRS. J. TOOGOOD.



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PREFACE.

THE writer of these little Sketches, having been for some time interested in charity-schools, has frequently during that period felt a desire to place in the hands of the senior classes some simple outline of the History of the Church, from a conviction that nothing is more likely to confirm an attachment to that Church than a knowledge of the facts connected with her history; and that the instability now so prevalent among her members arises often, and particularly in the lower classes, from ignorance. Those who have never been shewn the rock from whence they were hewn are not likely to value themselves either upon its strength or its durability.

The desire to supply some little information has been increased upon finding that the subject is by no means disagreeable to children, but that it is easy to interest them in it; and as the education of the lower orders generally ceases when they leave the parish-school, it appears desirable to seize the opportunity afforded by their attendance there, for imparting such knowledge as is likely to arm them against the temptations they are about to encounter.

After a fruitless search for a history within their capacity (for the most simple that have yet come to the hands of the writer have proved upon experiment

far beyond their reach), this little sketch has been marked out; and although such a task is now rendered comparatively easy by sources of authentic information which of late have been opened, yet the feeble hand by which it has been attempted, under a feeling of the sacredness of the subject, has often paused, from a sense of its own weakness, and has been induced to persevere only by a consideration that simplicity, both in matter and manner, being the principal requisite, superior talents and attainments were not necessary to the successful accomplishment of the work, but that rather they might stand in its way; for, while avoiding the faults doubtless here visible, they might soar above the reach of those whose improvement has been principally studied.

It is remarkable that, among the vast quantities of religious books published as presents and prizes for children, it is difficult to find any calculated to encourage fidelity to the Church, while those of a contrary tendency are pouring forth abundantly. It is therefore hoped that the publication of this little volume may not be deemed unseasonable; and that, under the Divine blessing, it may become useful to the edifying some of the little ones of Christ's fold.



Sketches from Church History.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH OF GOD FROM THE FALL OF ADAM TO THE
COMING OF CHRIST.



ONCE heard some children, at the annual examination of their school, unable to answer the question, "What is meant by the holy Catholic Church?" They were all silent: at length one replied, "The church means the building in which we worship;" thus making a matter of faith a mere matter of sight; whereas we know "faith is the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. ii. 1). When we repeat our creed, we profess our faith in the holy Catholic Church. We cannot join in the morning or evening service without doing so. Now, it is a solemn thing to speak in the house of God; and when we there utter words, the meaning of which

we have never taken the trouble to inquire, we must appear before "Him unto whom all hearts are open," as those "who offer the sacrifice of fools," and "who are rash with their mouth before God:" surely our reverence for God, and for His holy temple, ought to be sufficient to induce us to think before we speak. The apostle has said, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 15, 16). Our hope arises from our faith; and to have hope, we must have the sure foundation of a well-grounded faith.

In these days, when iniquity abounds, men are "high-minded," and feel much confidence in themselves,—to despise what has been respected, is considered by some a mark of the growth of intellect; thus, little reverence is preserved for those things which saints of old, and the most holy in all nations and all ages, have rested their faith on. It therefore appears more than ever necessary to prepare ourselves, both young and old, to resist the temptations which the unstable may throw in our way, and to continue steadfast in the "faith once delivered to the saints."

By the Church, we mean, not a building

made with hands, but that one society of men, whom God has called to a knowledge of Himself, and to call upon His name; and who, by the motions of divine grace, are invited to partake of eternal bliss, through Christ Jesus. This Church began in Adam, after he repented of that sin by which he fell from holiness. Unto him was the promise given, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). Abel is the first who is stated in Scripture to have offered sacrifice to God. The Church after Abel (who was killed by Cain) was continued in Seth; for God was known and worshipped by him, and by his successors, till the time of Noah. The wickedness of the world had in those days become so abominable in the eyes of God, that He is said to have repented that He had made man; and by a flood He destroyed all on the face of the earth, except Noah and his family, in whom the Church was preserved. Noah was chosen of God as a light in those dark times; he was a preacher of righteousness, both before and after the flood. When the waters subsided, and Noah returned from his ark, he offered sacrifice to God, which was accepted; and God gave to him the promise that the ground should never again be cursed for man's sake (Gen. viii. 20, 21). In Shem, the eldest son of Noah, was a knowledge and worship of God continued;

and the expectation of a coming Saviour was by him transmitted to men. Heber, the descendant of Shem (from whom also the people of God were called the Hebrews), was, like him, blest with the light of revelation; and God was pleased to be called the God of Shem (Gen. ix. 26) until the days of Abraham. Idolatry, which had spread over the world before the flood, again appeared; and not only did the descendants of Ham and Japheth fall into this sin, but some among the children of Shem declined from God, and worshipped idols.

Abraham, who was descended from Heber, was called to leave his father's house, God giving him the promise that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him (Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3); and also appointing circumcision "as a token of the covenant" (Gen. xvii. 9), and as a peculiar mark of his having been called out from the rest of the world. A son was born unto Abraham in a miraculous way; he was named Isaac, of whose two sons God chose the younger, Jacob, in whom to preserve His Church: before his birth, God had said, "the elder shall serve the younger; Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. ix. 12, 13). The family of Esau fell into idolatry; but Jacob, whom God named Israel, became the

father of the twelve tribes of Israel,—that chosen and holy people, who alone of all the earth were instructed in the laws of God, and enjoyed His favour. This people were also called Jews, from Judah. Judah, before whom all the brethren bowed, was the head of the tribe, possessing the royal dignity ; and there was a prophecy, that the sceptre, or royal power, should not depart from Judah till Shiloh (or the Deliverer) were come ; that is, until the Saviour should be born. The Israelites were thus greatly honoured above all the nations of the world. God had been pleased to make Himself known unto them. Unto them only were committed the oracles of God ; to them was the adoption, for they were chosen as the adopted children of God. St. Paul, in speaking of the Israelites, says, “To whom pertaineth the adoption, the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom. ix. 4, 5).

God has been pleased to make us all dependent beings ; those who are young and weak depend for help and protection upon the older and stronger. Adam was appointed by God as guide and protector to his family. The promise of redemption was given him, and he was enabled to teach his children of

the same salvation. He was both king and priest to his children, ruling them, and making known to them the will of God. In those early ages of the world, when the father died, the first-born son naturally took his place. The first-born is called, in Gen. xlix. 3, "the beginning of strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," and he succeeded as king and priest to the family. We find by the blessing spoken by Isaac, when he gave the younger what usually belonged to the elder, that the first-born was ruler over his brethren (Gen. xxvii. 29): "Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down before thee;" this pre-eminence of the elder continued, the elder almost invariably succeeding to the kingly and priestly office, until the time when Israel came out of Egypt. The Church of God then became a national Church, and the offices of ruler and priest were divided. Judah held the sceptre, and from his tribe came the kings and rulers: the tribe of Levi were the appointed priests. Joseph's two sons became each head of a tribe. Thus, from the fall of Adam and the calling of the Church, to the time when Aaron was sanctified priest unto God, the eldest, or first-born, was generally the priest and king: exceptions arose in cases of impiety, as in Cain, who, though first-born, was rejected of God; to Abel the office then

fell. Seth took the place of Abel; "for God, said she (Eve), hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen. iv. 25). Seth was succeeded by Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah (Gen. v.). Noah governed the Church both before and after the flood, and left the office to Shem, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant; and God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." From Shem sprang Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham (Gen. xi. 16-27). Shem survived till the time of Abraham; Isaac was succeeded by Jacob; Jacob by Judah and his sons; but during the bondage in Egypt, the kingly and priestly office could not be fully exercised.

The mercy of God still followed His chosen people; and after about 400 years, He brought them out of the land of Egypt, according to the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The form of government, appropriate only for a household, was then enlarged, and made suitable for a nation; the tribe of Judah, according to prophecy, held the sceptre, or kingly power; the tribe of Levi was appointed by God to wait upon Him in His holy temple; and out of the families of that tribe Aaron was called of God to the priest's office.

The priests were divided into two sorts,—they were of the sons of Aaron: there was the high-priest, and a lower rank inferior to him. The Levites were inferior to the priest, and assisted him in the service of the sanctuary; some were judges and scribes, others were singers and porters.

The high priest was consecrated to his holy office; his consecration lasted seven days; he was washed with water, clothed with the sacred garments which God had prescribed, holy oil was poured on his head, and sacrifices were offered on the altar for his sanctification. The breastplate of judgment, worn by the high priest, contained twelve precious stones; and by these stones God shewed what would be the success of the Israelites in battle. The Urim and Thummim some have supposed to have been two stones by which God made revelations to the priest, but their exact nature is not known.

The priests of inferior rank were consecrated in the same kind of way. Both the high priest and the other priests offered sacrifices every Sabbath and festival-day; the high priests made a sin-offering once every year, both for their own sins, and for those of the people; they laid the iniquities of the people on a sacred goat; the high priest laid his hands on its head, and confessed all the

sins of the children of Israel, and then the goat was allowed to escape, or run away into the wilderness.

The priests also ministered every morning and evening, and provided for the table of the Lord twelve loaves, in remembrance of God's mercy to the twelve tribes in their wanderings, when He gave them bread from heaven (Exod. xvi. 14). These were the principal things done by the priests; but there were many other services, for an account of which you must look in the Bible; they are too numerous to mention here.

Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, were the first who were consecrated priests. Nadab and Abihu died before their father, leaving no children: they had presumed to offer strange fire upon the altar, and for this crime God destroyed them (Numb. iii. 4). From Eleazar and Ithamar came the whole line of priests. In David's time, sixteen families had proceeded from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar; these were divided by David into twenty-four courses or classes, and each course was named after the head of the family: they were thus classed in order that their labours might be divided, —one attending on one day, and another on another, according to their classes or companies. It is said of Zacharias, "He was of the course of Abia," Luke i. 5; and in the

8th and 9th verses are these words: "And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord." It was the custom of the priests to cast lots as to the kind of service each should perform—whether to sacrifice or burn incense. Over each company a ruling priest was set, called the ruler of the priests, or the chief priest: thus, in St. Mark xiv. 53, the high priest and the chief priest are both mentioned.

All it is necessary to add further respecting the Jewish Church is, that it was supported by a tenth of the produce of the land. Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils he had gained to the priest Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 20).

Jacob made a vow to consecrate a tenth of all that God should give him to His service (Gen. xxviii. 20).

Moses enforced the payment of the tenths, or tithes, saying, "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed that the field bringeth forth year by year."

The withholding the tithes from the service of God was visited upon the Jewish nation as a great sin against God. We find many instances of this in the Bible. In the prophet Malachi (iii. 8) are these words:

“Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

The Jewish Church was a type of good things to come. All the sacrifices, ceremonies, and observances, led to and prepared the way for the coming of Christ, in whom that which was foretold was fulfilled; there was then a new priesthood, new sacraments, a new law, and a new covenant.

CHAPTER II.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

ST. PAUL, in his epistle to the Romans, gives an account of the sinful state of the Gentile world at the time he wrote, and he mentions particularly the Greeks ; but we are not to conclude from this that the Greeks were worse than other nations. The contrary is rather the fact : they were the wisest and most intelligent among the Gentiles ; the natural genius of this wonderful people was quite unrivalled ; they knew how to write beautiful poetry, to paint beautiful pictures, to build fine houses ; they could do all these things better than we can in these days. But if the most enlightened had become so corrupt, what must have been the state of the barbarous nations ?

That the Greeks had a knowledge of God, is evident from what St. Paul says (Rom. i. 21), "when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful ;" they concealed this knowledge of God ; and the rulers, instead of glorifying Him, and

teaching the people to do so, had invented a loathsome idolatry, to justify them in giving way to all the sinful affections of fallen man. They knew the judgment of God; yet they not only committed things worthy of death, but they had pleasure in others who did the same. Our own country, at the time St. Paul wrote this epistle to the Romans, was not in a better state than other Gentile nations. Some knowledge of God, handed down to them from the patriarchs, still existed; but the British, like the Greeks, had corrupted the truths they had received, and in submitting to the power of the priests, called Druids, had fallen into many gross abominations. These priests taught, indeed, that the soul lives after the body is dead; but they added many superstitions to their creed: they held mistletoe, the plant we see growing on the branches of trees, in great veneration; they pretended to a knowledge of magic, and to a power of working miracles by it; and they offered up human sacrifices. If their chief fell sick, a man was slain as a sacrifice; and they believed their chief would recover from his sickness in consequence. It is said in Scripture, "the dark places of the earth are full of cruelty;" and in examining the false religions which men have invented for themselves, we shall find this sad truth most clearly proved. It was one of the customs

of the Druids to have a large figure in the shape of a man, made of wicker-work ; this was filled with those who had been guilty of some offence or crime ; and if there was not a sufficient number of criminals to fill it, innocent persons were cast in, and then all were burnt to death. When this country was conquered, as many others were, by the Romans, their idolatries were introduced ; but as their religion was in many respects like that of the Greeks, I need give you no farther account of it.

We see, then, that the Greeks, and all the Gentiles, had rebelled against the knowledge of God ; and the Jews, while they condemned their sins condemned themselves ; for they, although they were favoured with a knowledge of God's holy law given by Moses, and also with the sacred writings of the prophets, had committed the same sins : " wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things ;" thus St. Paul spoke to them, lest they should imagine they were nearer salvation than the Gentiles, while they were guilty of the same sins. God had not called them into the Church that they might sin with safety, but that they might repent. All the members of God's Church, both they and we, shall be called to give an account of the use made of those means placed within our

reach, and God will require a growth in holiness in proportion to the advantages we have enjoyed. The Jews, who considered themselves, and who were indeed, very highly favoured, were, while they condemned the heathen, treasuring up unto themselves "wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. ii. 5). What a warning are they to those members of the Christian Church, who, though "called to be saints," are not more moral in their lives than such as have never heard the name of Jesus! and what a solemn reflection it is, that all will have to give a strict account to God of the use made of the means of grace with which they have been favoured, of the sabbaths, of the sacraments, and of the warnings sent from God through His appointed ministers! St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, teaches that all "came short of the praise of God;" the Gentile, because he sinned against the law of nature, or against that knowledge of good and evil which God had planted in his bosom; and the Jew, because he sinned against the law of Moses, and committed the same sins he condemned in the Gentile. To save both Jew and Gentile, the Lord Jesus came, and offered salvation to all who should believe in Him. Christ Himself first preached these glad tidings; He afterwards instituted an

ordained ministry, and Himself appointed those who were to become preachers of the gospel, and the chosen channel or means by which He sends His blessings to His Church. This Church, like the ark built at the command of God, for the preservation of His servant Noah and his family, is appointed by God for the salvation of men. During the life of Jesus, the gospel was offered only to the Jews; He had forbidden His apostles to preach to any others at that time, saying: "Go ye *not* into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye *not*; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6). But the arms of mercy were stretched forth to a disobedient and gainsaying people; their hard and carnal hearts were offended at Christ; they had expected He would come among them in earthly pomp, that He would reign as a mighty king, and that they should by Him subdue the Gentiles, and enjoy worldly wealth and pleasure: but when they found that His kingdom was not of this world, that He came reproving their sins, calling them to repentance and holiness of life, and bidding them seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, they hated Him, and refused to receive Him for their king. The wonderful works He performed caused the rulers of the Jews to fear that He would lessen their power

and credit with the people; and thus moved with envy they laid snares for His life, and bribed Judas to betray Him. When He was brought to trial, Pilate, the Roman governor, knowing Him to be innocent, gave Him up to be crucified through fear of the populace; and Christ died, a lamb without blemish and without spot—He poured out His soul unto death, to redeem His Church; for He came to endure the cross, despising the shame, that He might bring many sons unto glory.

CHAPTER III.

ST. PETER.

THE reign of Christ is not like that of an earthly king ; it ceased not at His death. He, though absent from the Church in body, was present with it in spirit ; and He has promised to be ever present with His apostles and their successors “ even unto the end of the world.” “ His dominion is an everlasting dominion,” and “ His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” When He left the world, He entrusted His chosen servants with spiritual authority to rule over and govern His Church, which is His spiritual household. Soon after His resurrection, we find Him giving power and authority to His ten apostles to become heads of the Church. (St. John xx. 21, 22, 23.) “ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye

retain, they are retained." Our Lord had also appointed seventy elders (St. Luke x.), whom we call presbyters, which means elders. To these two degrees, appointed by our Lord, His apostles afterwards added that of deacons. In the 6th chapter of the Acts, we have an account of their ordination. The word deacon means servant: they were so called because they assisted the priests or elders, and held an inferior rank. Thus, in the Christian ministry, we find there were three degrees; apostles, presbyters or elders, and deacons. The apostles appointed others to the episcopal office, giving them power to superintend the different churches over which they were placed; these were called overseers, or persons who watch over: we name them bishops, from an old word used in England, signifying an overseer or superintendent, because the bishops were the superintendents of the Church. No minister ever dares to take the holy office upon himself until he is ordained, as were the apostles: those heads of the Church, who have been ordained, ordain others; just as the apostles ordained deacons. In the office for ordaining ministers of the Church of England, the words of our Lord are used. The apostles, then (like Eleazar and Ithamar in the Jewish Church), were the spiritual fathers of a long line of ministers; and as the Jewish

priests were of one family, proceeding from the same head or individual, so the ministers of the Christian Church are connected together by ordination, some ordaining others from the days of the apostles up to the present time. Thus, we trace a connexion between St. Paul and our present Archbishop of Canterbury; for example, St. Paul and St. Peter were followed by Linus, Linus by Cletus, Cletus by Clement, Clement by Evaristus, and so on, down to the present bishops of our Church.

After our Lord had ascended into heaven, we find His disciples, to the number of an hundred and twenty, assembled in Jerusalem. St. Peter, one of the eleven, proposed to those assembled, that another apostle should be chosen to fill up the place of the traitor Judas, of whom it had been foretold in the Psalms that another should take his bishopric. It appeared right to appoint one of those men who had been the constant companions of the Lord Jesus and His apostles, from the preaching of John the Baptist until the ascension of our Lord; since having been thus an eye-witness of the miracles, and a sharer in the instructions of Christ, he would be well qualified to preach to others. They cast lots, therefore, between two; and having prayed, the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the rest of the apos-

ties. On the day of Pentecost the promise of our Lord (that His apostles should be baptised with the Holy Ghost) was fulfilled. Strangers dwelling out of Jerusalem were astonished to hear their own language spoken by Galileans, who were, for the most part, unlearned and ignorant men; for every man heard in his own tongue "the wonderful works of God, and they were all amazed;" "some mocking said, these men are full of new wine." But Peter (who is called the apostle of the circumcision, because appointed to preach particularly at Jerusalem and to the Jews) stood up and declared the gospel, calling every one to repentance, and promising them the gift of the Holy Spirit. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of their sins; and there were added to the Church the same day about three thousand souls" (Acts ii.). This Church, once established at Jerusalem, continued to increase, and St. James became its first bishop. We find the elders of this Church mentioned in the Acts (xv. 2): the ordination of deacons there has already been mentioned; and we learn that St. Stephen, who was one of them, preached the gospel (Acts vii.). "The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient unto

the faith" (Acts vi. 7). The enemies of the Lord now arose and endeavoured to destroy His Church. The Sadducees (a sect that believed not the resurrection of the dead) were especially grieved at the rapid spread of that gospel, which to them was "foolishness." They seized St. Peter and St. John, and cast them into prison. A solemn council was held the next day, when these apostles were examined, who, no way intimidated, openly testified of the Lord Jesus, so that the rulers were quite astonished at the boldness of those poor and unlearned men. They contented themselves with commanding them to speak and teach no more in the name of Jesus, and so let them go. Yet these sinners against themselves could not stop the course of the mercy of God. The glorious gospel still continued to spread; and the Sadducees, filled with indignation, again laid hands on St. Peter and St. John, and put them into the common prison. But the angel of the Lord set them free, and said, "Go, and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." And when the rulers found them doing so, they asked, in anger, "Did we not command you that you should not teach in this name?" (Acts v. 28.) But St. Peter answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men;" and he taught them that Jesus, whom they had crucified, "God

had exalted, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto His people, and forgiveness of sins." The rulers would have slain the apostles, but were prevented by fear of the people. A severe persecution arose (A.D. 36), when the holy martyr St. Stephen was stoned to death; and the disciples, being driven by their enemies from Jerusalem, dispersed into other countries. St. Peter preached to those of the house of Israel who were dispersed through Syria and Asia Minor. It is also probable that he visited all those places mentioned in the first epistle of St. Peter i. 1. A church was also founded in Egypt by St. Mark; and Anianus was ordained first bishop of Alexandria.

We have seen with what malice and fury the world pursued those who had come unto Christ; hating the Lord, they hated His servants also; and the righteous blood of the apostles was spilt by that stiff-necked generation. We have seen the martyrdom of St. Stephen; James, the brother of John, Herod killed with the sword (Acts xii. 2); James, surnamed the Just, bishop of Jerusalem, was put to death by the Jews; St. Andrew, who preached the gospel in the countries near the Red Sea, was crucified at Patras, in Achaia.

It is evident, both from the sacred historians and from heathen writers, that the early Christians greatly excelled us in the

innocence and purity of their lives; their holy faith being received with meekness, joined them together as a band of brothers. After the converts had entered the Church by baptism (typified in the Jewish Church by circumcision), we are told (Acts ii. 41 and following verses), "that they continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship;" by which we know that they firmly adhered to the true faith, which is signified by "the apostles' doctrine," and that they were all joined in external things, and were perfectly united as men in partnership. It appears from the Scriptures that the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper was received daily, and this continued to be the custom; for a bishop named Cyprian, who lived some time after this period, says, "We receive the eucharist every day, as the food that nourishes us to salvation." The Church met in daily prayer, and thus openly acknowledged their dependence on God, and publicly honoured Him. The Jews also in their Church, before the coming of Christ, offered every morning and evening a sacrifice to God. This is commanded in Exodus xxix. 38, 39: "Now, this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually; and one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even." The Christian ho-

nours God not with sacrifices such as those offered by the Jews, but with sacrifices of prayer and praise. A writer of the history of the Church, in speaking of the daily public prayers of the first Christians, up to the end of the third century, says, "the Christians offered their ordinary prayers at three stated times of the day—at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour, according to the custom observed by the Jews; but, besides these stated hours of devotion, true believers were assiduous in their addresses to the Supreme Being, and poured forth frequently their vows and supplications before His throne, because they considered prayer as the most essential duty, as well as the noblest employment of a sanctified nature."¹

We find it recorded that Christians sold their houses and lands, and laid the money at the apostles' feet: and at a time when Christianity was in its infancy, having much to encounter, and few to succour it, this liberality must have been of great assistance, particularly as the apostles, as heads of the Church, were left at liberty to dispose of these funds as might the most conduce to her general welfare. It is refreshing to look back upon the lovely things recorded of the early Church. Volumes might be written on the simple account given in the Acts of

¹ Mosheim.

the Apostles. How different were the lives of Christians then from the lives of Christians now ! Yet we, like them, are called upon to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God ; we are commanded, in the same words they were, to crucify “ the flesh with the affections and lusts.” *We* enter the Church by the same holy baptism and “ washing of regeneration ;” and God has also provided for us the “ bread of life.” If, indeed, we had the example of the early Christians only, we might calm ourselves, while we remain so far behind them in the road towards perfection, with the idea that they, like most new converts, were overzealous ; but the Scriptures shew us that theirs was but a reasonable service ; that it is but reasonable that we should present ourselves “ a living sacrifice” unto God ; and that He has called us away from ourselves, and our sins, and from this world, “ to be saints.”

CHAPTER IV.

ST. PAUL.

SAUL, afterwards named Paul, was also called by Christ to be an apostle. His name was changed because in his first journey among the Gentiles he converted a man named Sergius Paulus (Acts xiii. 7, 8, 9). He was one of the sect of the Pharisees—a man of undaunted courage and of blameless life, yet he had rejected the gospel, and thought he “ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus” (Acts xxvi. 9). In the persecution which arose at Jerusalem, we find him bearing a conspicuous part; the witnesses who stoned St. Stephen to death laid down their clothes at Saul’s feet (Acts vii. 58). It was customary, in executions of this kind, for the witnesses against the criminal to cast the first stone; and for this purpose they put off their upper garments, and gave them to be kept by such of the bystanders as were equally hearty against the persons about to suffer: we see, therefore, by St. Paul’s keeping the clothes, that

he consented to the death of St. Stephen. In his zeal against the Christians he was not content with persecuting those of Jerusalem, but "breathing out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," he "went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogue, that if he found any of that way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts ix. 1, 2). The high priest gave him the authority he sought; and he was on his way to Damascus, when he beheld a heavenly vision, and the Lord Jesus said unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." And he also, like the other apostles, received a commission to preach the gospel.

The most miraculous increase to the numbers of the Church took place at the preaching of St. Paul. The missionary labours of this chosen vessel of God commenced A.D. 44; churches were planted by him at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Troas, Galatia; he presided over the Church at Ephesus for many years; and, on his return to Jerusalem, was arrested, and sent for trial to Rome (A.D. 59); he afterwards revisited Ephesus, where Timothy was ordained bishop. Titus also was placed as bishop of Crete. St. Paul visited Macedonia

and Spain ; and there is some reason to suppose that the first Church in England was planted by him ; but we have no certain account of this. We know, however, that a Church existed here from the times of the apostles. While St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, he was permitted to live in his own hired house : he was always chained to a soldier ; nevertheless he made many converts, and Christianity found its way into the palace of the emperor.

Nothing could exceed the hatred with which the heathens regarded the Christians. We can partly account for this when we consider that the rulers saw the worship of the false gods, which they had set up, now despised. The Christian religion was called by them " a detestable superstition," and its professors were considered the enemies of mankind.

Rome was in those days a most splendid city ; it might have been called the queen of the world. Many nations had been conquered by the Romans, and all the spoils and riches were brought to that city. Nero was then emperor of Rome ; he was a cruel and bloodthirsty tyrant, and was suspected of having himself set fire to the city, the seat of his empire. To rid himself of the hatred this brought upon him, he endeavoured to make the world believe that the

Christians had been guilty of that crime. On this pretence a furious persecution arose against them in the year 64. It is painful to describe the tortures devised by those blind idolators, the Romans. Many Christians suffered, like their Lord, by crucifixion ; some were covered with the skins of beasts, and baited by dogs ; they were sewed up in sacks, and being covered with hemp and pitch, were set up to burn as lights during the night. The Emperor Nero offered his gardens, that the people might enjoy, as a sport, the sufferings of the followers of the Redeemer ; but "in vain did the heathen rage and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed." The vine which He had planted continued to prosper, and to spread its fair branches over the earth.

At Rome the apostle Paul, after having fought a good fight, and kept the faith, finished his course, by bearing testimony by his death to the truth which he had so zealously maintained during his life. He was put to death about the year 68.

The gospels were not written immediately after the death of Christ ; for some time the doctrines of Christianity were preserved by word of mouth ; but when its professors increased in number, it became necessary that written accounts should be made. In the

gospels, as well as in the epistles, the apostles spoke not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Cor. ii. 13). St. Matthew, whose gospel stands first in your Testament, was the first who wrote; this was between the years 38 and 64, but the exact time is not known. St. Mark's was written for the edification of the Christians dwelling at Rome, A.D. 65, or about that time. St. Luke's gospel is of about the same date. St. John wrote the latest; and as he had not seen the others, his gospel confirms all that is contained in them. The apostles, acting under the divine command, "Go ye into all nations," were unable to remain long in one place, or to confine their attention solely to one Church. St. Paul, in all his journeyings, still watching affectionately over those who, through his instrumentality, had been brought into the fold of Christ's Church, wrote several epistles to keep them in the same faith and fellowship. We have his epistles to the Church at Rome, at Corinth, in Galatia, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica; his epistles to Titus and to Timothy, in which he instructs them in the duties of Christian ministers and bishops; to Philemon; and to the Hebrews. These epistles were not intended for the edification of those young churches

only, but for them and for us, for the Catholic Church throughout all ages and in all lands. There was no printing in those days ; and in order to spread these holy Scriptures, it was necessary to transcribe them ; the copies thus made were passed from one Church to another, as may be seen by St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians, chap. iv. ver. 16 : " And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans ; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." These writings were not collected into one volume, or called the New Testament, till after the death of the apostles.

CHAPTER V.

ST. JOHN.

ST. JOHN, after having preached the gospel to the Samaritans, whom Philip the deacon had converted, went into Asia Minor, where he lived during the latter part of his life.

Churches were planted by him at Smyrna, Pergamos, Laodicea, and many other places. He was banished to the solitary island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation. He had been sent there by Domitian, who was emperor of Rome, and who, like Nero, persecuted the Church. In this persecution, all who were of the house of David were sought out; for there was a general expectation that some great one would spring from this line. Some poor persons were brought before the emperor, being of the family of David. The emperor demanded what money they had; and when Christ and His kingdom should appear, for it was expected that Christ would be an earthly prince. They replied, that His kingdom was not of this world; and that His glory should appear when He should

come to judge the quick and the dead. Domitian, thinking his throne was in no danger from such as these, dismissed them with contempt.

In St. John's book of Revelation, he addresses the angels, or bishops, of the seven Churches in Asia. The word *angel* means messenger, or ambassador. In Malachi, chap. ii. ver. 7, the priest of the Lord is called angel, or messenger of the Lord; and in the Jewish Church the chief minister of the synagogue is termed the *angel* of the synagogue. The name is applied to the Christian bishops as to the angels or ambassadors of Christ; and each is addressed as the head or representative of his Church, and in a manner suited to their respective states.

St. John once, when about to take a journey, committed to the care of one of the pastors of the Church a young man who had been baptized, and who had lived for some time according to his Christian profession: however, during the absence of the apostle, he fell away; associating with sinful persons, he was corrupted, grew worse and worse, and at last became captain of a band of robbers. St. John, on his return, heard the account of his fall; he sought out the robbers in their mountains, and, fearlessly exposing himself among the lawless company, inquired for their captain: when

the young man came, and recognised the aged apostle, the man of God, he was full of remorse and shame, and fled from him; but St. John pursued him, — “Why, my son,” said he, “fliest thou from thy father, unarmed and old? fear not, yet there remain hopes of salvation; believe me, Christ hath sent me.” The shame of the erring disciple melted into penitence, and he stood weeping bitterly; and finally, by the prayers and exhortations of St. John, he was led back again into the fold, a sheep that had been lost, yet was found. Happy are those who despise not the guide of their youth; but, having once strayed, yet return, with lowly and penitent hearts, to the paths of holiness and peace.

When St. John grew old, and was unable to say much in the churches, he would constantly repeat the sentence, “Children, love one another.” Those who heard him inquiring why he often said this, he replied, that nothing more was needed. And certainly Christ’s disciples will be careful to obey that new commandment which He brought upon the earth, and will love one another.

St. John survived the other apostles, and lived to see the fulfilment of our Saviour’s prediction of the fall of Jerusalem. This prophecy, which is found in the gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, was

accomplished A.D. 70. The Romans, who, as I have said, were at that time a great nation, held the Jews in subjection; and these people, thinking to throw off the yoke, rose to resist the power of the conquerors. To quell the rebellion, and to bring them to obedience, Titus, the Roman general, with a large army, came against the city. It was at the feast of the Passover, when the place was filled with an immense multitude of people, who had come from all parts, according to Jewish custom, to celebrate that great solemnity. The wretched inhabitants had divided into parties, and carried on furious contentions among themselves, and the city was full of tumult and bloodshed. Famine and pestilence also made terrible ravages among them. They were driven by hunger to live on the most loathsome food; they not only devoured rats and mice, but human flesh was used as a last means of sustaining life; a woman of distinction in the city even boiled her own child, in order to eat it. Soon after this awful circumstance, the city was entered by the Roman conquerors. Its glorious temple, which had been forty and six years in building, and on which the Jews justly prided themselves, was now laid in the dust; and although the Roman general, Titus, was desirous to save it, he was unable to do so; it was burnt to the

ground; and, according to the prophecy spoken by our Saviour, "one stone was not left upon another" (Mark xiii. 2). Above a million of souls perished in the siege, and almost a hundred thousand were taken captives: thus, after a siege of six months, this fair city, which had flourished for two thousand years, was utterly destroyed. No doubt, you can recall the words in which our Lord predicted this destruction; you will find them in the gospel of St. Luke xix. 42 and following verses. The Christians, believing the prophecy, expected the calamity: they had accordingly taken their departure from Jerusalem, and thus they were saved from the general desolation. They had established themselves in a place named Pella.

CHAPTER VI.

IGNATIUS.

IGNATIUS was a disciple of St. John, and was ordained bishop of Antioch ; this is the city mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. There was a Church there, planted by the apostles, and the disciples were there first called *Christians* (Acts xi. 26). Ignatius lived in times when the Church suffered very severe trials. Trajan, then emperor of Rome, though called "the good," was very jealous for the honour of his false gods ; he saw the number of the Christians daily increasing, and he feared they would endanger the peace of his empire. All who confessed Christ were therefore menaced with death ; and the only means of escape was to renounce Christianity, and to sacrifice to the gods of the heathens.

Every sort of cruelty was practised against them ; and while many Christians were put to death, others perished through hunger, having fled to the forests for refuge from the fury of their enemies. Thus was the gospel of Christ rejected of men, who, hating to be

reformed, would not have the Redeemer to reign over them. Yet the Lord preserved His chosen flock, the Church; and while the power of these heathen Roman emperors is a mountain that He has brought low, and cast down, the kingdom established by Christ and His twelve followers is as a valley that has been exalted.

A noble army of martyrs now died, confessing, before their heathen persecutors, that Christ is truly the Son of God.

Ignatius continued to guide his flock during forty years of this sorrowful time; and his character as a bishop is thus described: "He was a man in all things like to the apostles; as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labour, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary: he was like a divine lamp, illuminating the hearts of the faithful by his exposition of the holy Scriptures: and lastly, to preserve his Church, he scrupled not freely to expose himself to a bitter death." The emperor Trajan, by a war in which he was then engaged, was brought to Antioch, where Ignatius was bishop. Ignatius, knowing the emperor's enmity to the Christians, hoped to purchase safety for his Church, by offering himself up freely; he was accordingly examined by Trajan, and by his command carried bound

to Rome. While preparations were made for his martyrdom, he, and the Christians, his companions, earnestly recommended the Church to the care and protection of the blessed Saviour, beseeching Him to stop the persecution which had begun, and to bless Christians with a true love to one another. That his punishment might be public, its execution was appointed to take place upon the occasion of a festival in honour of the heathen gods. The barbarous people were then entertained with the conflict of gladiators, or prize-fighters; and they hunted and fought with wild beasts: to add to their amusement, the pious Ignatius was brought into the theatre and thrown to the lions. It was considered most disgraceful to be condemned to this death. None but those who had been guilty of the vilest crimes suffered it that way; but the children of God were considered as "the filth of the earth," and therefore the severest death was appointed for them.

Ignatius left seven epistles, which are happily still preserved to the Church. In these he recommends the most perfect union among the members of the Church; he admonished those to whom he wrote, to avoid and have no fellowship with any who separate themselves from the Catholic body, and fall into schisms: he says, that Christians, being all united to Christ, are all partakers of the same spiritual

life ; to separate from this Church, and to lose the subordination in which they stood to their pastors, was to tear in pieces the body of Christ, and to expose themselves to the seductions of those who would draw them from the faith and hope of the gospel. Thus spoke one of the early Christian bishops, and at a time when the power of God's Holy Spirit was much more evidently seen in the lives of those who professed Christianity than at present. To preserve the Ephesians (to whom he wrote one of his epistles) from being led astray by false teachers, he says, " Let no one mistake ; if any man is not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. If the prayer of one or two has so much strength, how much more that of the bishop and of the whole Church ? He who separates from it, is proud, and condemns himself : for it is written, ' God resisteth the proud.' Let us study, therefore, obedience to the bishop, that we may be subject to God . . . Every one to whom the Master commits the stewardship ought to be received as the Master himself."

After the death of Ignatius, Trajan relented, and grew less severe : he had employed a man named Pliny to proceed against the Christians ; and hearing from him an account of their simplicity and goodness, that they were blameless and harmless, and that their only crime was, that they followed " a depraved

and excessive superstition" (for so they called Christianity) with great obstinacy, he commanded that they should no longer be sought out; but those who offered themselves, and declared they were believers in Christ, should be put to death.

It appears that the Christians suffered not only with patience, but that they, in many cases, rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer, and earnestly desired martyrdom; and of Ignatius it has been said, that he would "as calmly lay down his life as another man could his clothes;" for he thought it was "better to die with Christ than to live and reign sole monarch of the world."

CHAPTER VII.

JUSTIN MARTYR.

It was said of Justin, that he was “near the apostles both in time and virtue,” for he lived soon after them, and was like them in the sanctity of his life. Being the son of an heathen, he was not in his youth admitted into the fold of Christ; but having an inquiring mind, and a love for righteousness, he endeavoured to find out truth; and with this object, he applied himself to acquire all the learning of his times, and he placed himself under learned teachers, and such as were generally held in repute for wisdom. These, however, having only the wisdom of this world, and receiving not the revelation of God, did but turn men away from Him, leading them to honour idols, and stocks and stones; indeed, their religion was altogether so gross and so foolish, that it rather tempted to sin than led to goodness. Few men of understanding believed it; they conformed, indeed, to outward ceremonies, but this was only to keep up their character among their

more ignorant neighbours. Even the best of the philosophers, and the most moral, failed to persuade men to overcome their sinfulness; for they were very uncertain in their opinions, and were like those who try to find their way in the dark; for the wisdom of the wise is but foolishness. The gospel alone brought life and immortality to light; and those who rejected the gospel, wandered on in doubt and ignorance. So Justin found no rest for his soul till he was taught of God.

His conversion to Christianity took place in this way. One day as he was walking by the sea-side, he was met by an aged man, whose venerable appearance caught his attention, and they began to converse together. Justin spoke of the wisdom of the heathens, and of his own desire to know God: but the old man told him the wise among the Gentiles were but false teachers; he pointed out the prophets sent by God as much more ancient than any heathen philosophers; these, he said, were blessed and holy men; that they had foretold what should come to pass, being taught of the Spirit of God; that they shewed God was with them by working many miracles; that they glorified God, and had revealed to men that a Saviour should be born. Justin was much struck by what the aged man had spoken; he determined to study the prophets of the Bible,

and to examine the evidence of Christianity; and being, after a time, convinced of its truth, and that it came from above, he was filled with joy and peace in believing. The innocent lives of the Christians did much to confirm his faith; for the good works of those who profess Christianity often teaches as effectually as their preaching. The heathens saw the change which had taken place in Justin with much dismay; they wondered so great a man should receive a gospel which they counted foolishness, and should join himself to the despised followers of Christ. Justin, therefore, to justify his faith, and convince others, explained his reasons for embracing Christianity: he told his opponents that, in their religion, there was nothing worthy of God; that the gospel alone was effectual to check the sinful passions of men, and to fill them with lasting tranquillity. Thus, ever desirous to promote the glory of God, he endeavoured to lead others also to honour Him; and because some had erred from the truth, he wrote epistles to set aside their false doctrine, and to defend the faith of the Church.

The Christians at that time met with very hard treatment from unbelievers; and Justin, seeing the afflictions of his brethren, wrote to the emperor of Rome, to shew how unjust *their enemies* were in persecuting and

destroying persons of such peaceful and innocent lives as the Christians. The emperor, being of a mild and amiable disposition, listened to these arguments, and sent forth a command that Christians should be no more molested; that if any persecuted them merely because they were Christians, such should themselves be punished, and the Christians set free. This emperor also pointed out the good example they had set, that in an earthquake which had lately happened, they had calmly relied on their God, while the pagans were full of terror, and neglected the worship of those they professed to serve. After this the Church for a time enjoyed repose.

Some of the Jewish nation greatly opposed Justin,—as, indeed, they did all others who followed the doctrine of Christ, for they used to curse them from their synagogues; yet Justin bore all this with Christian patience, for he knew that those who are reviled should not revile again. He used to beseech God to grant them repentance, that they might cease to blaspheme, and believe to the saving of their souls. A Jew named Trypho had many arguments with Justin, and confessed himself much pleased with what he had heard from him.¹

Among those whom Justin endeavoured to bring to God, was one Crescens. He was

¹ Cave.

a philosopher, and was much admired at Rome ; but, like many others among the Gentile teachers, while he talked of virtue, he practised vice ; in fact, he was given up to wicked pleasures, and loving the praise of men more than the truth, he was at little pains to examine Christianity, though he had taken upon himself to condemn it. Justin was always bold for the truth, and plainly told him it was evident he knew nothing of the gospel against which he spoke. This put Crescens in a great rage, and he determined to be revenged ; and an opportunity of gratifying his malice soon after occurred.

There lived at Rome at that time a woman who had been addicted to all manner of iniquity ; but being converted, she was happily brought to repentance, and a belief in the gospel. She endeavoured to lead her husband in the same way, but without success ; for he continued very wicked, and at last grew so bad, she was obliged to leave him. He being much enraged at her departure, accused her to the emperor of being a Christian ; but finding she was going to defend herself, he attacked the person by whom she had been converted. His name was Ptolemy ; he was seized and cast into prison, and, after enduring much torture, was put to death. Upon this, one of those who had observed these proceedings, rose up and declared

against the injustice of seizing an inoffensive person, and putting him to death merely because he was a Christian. He had no sooner made his opinion known than he also was seized, and, with another, executed. Justin, grieved to see the children of God so hardly dealt with, wrote a letter to the emperor to crave mercy for them, giving a plain statement of what had occurred. His zeal in the Christian cause again roused his old enemy Crescens, who went to the emperor, and inflamed his mind against Justin; an easy matter, for the emperor was a strict observer of his pagan religion. A persecution was therefore set on foot. Justin and six others were seized and brought to judgment. The pagans at first endeavoured to persuade him to sacrifice to their gods. He, however, stood firm, and replied, that he had examined the doctrines of the heathens, but he never found rest until he embraced the gospel. When asked what was the doctrine of the gospel, he answered, "The right doctrine, which we piously profess, is this: We believe the one only God to be the Creator of all things visible and invisible, and confess our Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, foretold by the prophets of old, and who shall hereafter come to be the judge of mankind; a Saviour, preacher, and master of all those who are duly instructed by Him." Then the

judge, mocking his faith, demanded, "If I cause thee to be scourged from head to foot, thinkest thou thou shalt go to heaven?" He answered, "that although he should suffer, yet he hoped he should enjoy the portion of all true Christians, well knowing that the divine grace and favour was laid up for all such, and should be as long as the world endured." The governor talked with him no more, but commanded all to go and sacrifice to the gods, threatening, if they refused, they should be tormented; but Justin said he desired nothing more than to endure torments for our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be saved. His companions also desired their persecutors to hasten their measures, for they would not sacrifice to idols. So the governor gave this sentence: "They who refuse to do sacrifice to the gods, let them first be scourged, and then beheaded." Then these holy martyrs thanked God that they were counted worthy to die for His name, and passing again into prison, they suffered death according to the sentence.

CHAPTER VIII.

POLYCARP AND HIS TIMES.

POLYCARP, bishop of Smyrna, suffered martyrdom in the year 167 : he had conversed with the apostles, and received the government of his church from those who had been the companions of the Lord. It has been thought by many, that this bishop Polycarp was the angel of the church at Smyrna to whom St. John wrote (Rev. ii. 10). The account of his martyrdom agrees well with the words spoken in that prophecy. He was the friend of Ignatius ; and when the latter was on his way to Rome to suffer martyrdom, they met and conversed together on the state of the Church. Polycarp was remarkable for the firmness with which he opposed false doctrines : if he heard any thing likely to corrupt the simplicity of the Christian faith, he would stop his ears, and cry out, “ Good God ! unto what times hast Thou reserved me, that I should hear such things ! ” An ancient record gives an account of his death, and, after describing the patience

with which many suffered the cruelties of their oppressors at that time, proceeds: "Polycarp, when he heard these things, remained undisturbed, preserving his calmness and serenity; and he had resolved to remain in the city; but being persuaded by the entreaties and prayers of his friends, he retired to a village not far off, where he continued, with a few others, occupied day and night only in continual prayer, supplicating and beseeching peace for the churches throughout the world; for this was his continual habit. When he was brought forth, there was a great tumult among those who heard he was taken; moreover, the proconsul asked, as he approached, if he were Polycarp? and when he assented, he tried to persuade him to deny Christ, saying, 'Have pity on thine old age,' and such other things as are customary with them; as, 'Swear by the fortune of Cæsar,' 'Repent,' 'Say, Away with the godless!' (meaning the Christians). Then Polycarp, looking constantly on all the crowd in the amphitheatre, stretching forth his hand towards them, groaning, and looking up to heaven, said, 'Away with the godless!' But when the proconsul pressed him, and said, 'Swear, and I will release thee; reproach Christ,' Polycarp replied, 'Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never in-

jured me; how can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?' The proconsul said, 'I have wild beasts, and I will cast thee unto them, unless thou repentest.' He replied, 'Call them; I cannot change from good to evil; it is good to change from sin to righteousness.' The proconsul then said, 'I will cause thee to be devoured of fire, since thou despisest the beasts, unless thou repent.' Polycarp answered, 'Thou threatenest fire, which burneth but for a time, and is then extinguished; for thou knowest not the fire of future judgment and of eternal punishment reserved for the wicked;—but why do you delay? bring what thou wilt.'" The furious populace, enraged at his constancy, cried out, desiring that he might be thrown to a lion; but the crowd instantly collected wood and combustibles from the workshops and baths, and Polycarp was burned to death; eleven others died with him.

In the year 178 persecution also found its way into Gallia, the country we now call France, and many martyrs fell at Lyons and Vienne: Christians there were forbidden to leave their houses; the populace plundered them, cast stones at them, and ill used them wherever they went. Persons were daily seized and put to death. Sanctus, a deacon of the Church, endured the most intense suffering with great constancy; for his hope

was in his God, who is the "guide even unto death." Pothinus, remarkable for his zeal, and who had laboured for the propagation of Christianity, was then bishop of Lyons; and, though ninety years of age, yet his gray hairs were not spared; he suffered a variety of torture, and was cast into prison, where he died.

Polycarp wrote many epistles, one of which only is preserved; it was addressed to the Philippians, and was highly valued in the Church, because it exhorted all to serve God with holiness. In this epistle he bids Christians "to follow the example of the Lord, being lovers of the brethren, firm and immovable in the faith, and kindly affectioned one towards another, united in truth, carrying yourselves meekly to each other, despising no man."

CHAPTER IX.

ORIGEN AND HIS TIMES.

ORIGEN was born A.D. 186; his father, Leonidas, was a Christian, and took pains to instruct him early in the things of God: for this purpose, he set him daily to learn some portion of the Scriptures. This Origen accomplished easily, for in childhood he shewed those mental gifts which afterwards made him so famous; he was not satisfied with merely reading over, or learning his task, but he would ask questions about it, and so try to come at the meaning of what he read: and his father, seeing his anxiety to be instructed, would bless God for giving him such a child.

The Church had now enjoyed peace for a short time, for the emperor Severus appeared to favour Christianity. This, however, did not last long; and in the tenth year of his reign another persecution was set on foot, and among the martyrs of this time was Leonidas. Origen was only seventeen years of age when his father was condemned: he made no effort to dissuade him from his

resolution to suffer for the faith; on the contrary, fearing that the thoughts of the destitute state of his family (for he had seven children) might induce him to change his determination, he wrote to urge and exhort him to continue steadfast. Origen was a Christian, and, as such, doubtless believed that no earthly consideration can ever justify a sacrifice of religious principle. A steady obedience to plain commandments may sometimes lead to painful consequences, yet there is always comfort in the reflection that God will never leave or forsake those who serve Him. The Christian religion continued to spread at this period. The ministers of Christ, as messengers of the Lord of Hosts, by the beauty of their holy example turned many away from iniquity; the gospels had also been translated into many languages, and Origen, by his diligence and zeal, did much to spread them abroad: he also wrote many books on religious subjects. Origen was as remarkable for the severity of his life as for his learning; and he is said to have injured his health by the strictness with which he fasted: he spent his days in religious exercises and employment, and in the night he studied the Holy Scriptures; he took little sleep, and that on the bare ground. His friends often tried to persuade him to be less severe, but he persisted in his habit of self-

denial, and many heathens were gained over to the faith, beholding his good example.

Many holy martyrs poured out their blood unto death about this period. Two women, Marcella, and Potamiana her daughter, are well-known martyrs. Potamiana endured with great fortitude the malignity of her enemies; scalding pitch was poured over her body, and she was at last burnt to death with her mother. Many other women were condemned; the heathens endeavoured to shake their resolution, calling on them to confess the gods, and to blaspheme Jesus; but they answered, "We believe in God, and will continue steadfast to Him; as to your gods, we will neither serve nor adore them."

At Carthage, a lady named Perpetua was seized. You will find her name in your Prayer-book in the calendar in March. She was twenty-two years of age; her father had not received the faith, and was much distressed at his daughter's firm adherence to Christianity, and entreated her to procure safety by embracing idolatry. This woman had not yet been baptised; for adults, or persons who had passed infancy, were not in the primitive church baptised on their first desire to join the Christian body. They prepared for that holy sacrament by submitting to a course of religious instruction, by fast-

ing and prayer. Perpetua, however, when she found that her days on earth were numbered, seized an early opportunity, and was baptised. Soon afterwards she was cast into prison, where her father visited her, imploring her to renounce Christianity, saying, "Have pity, my daughter, on my gray hairs;" but her resolution was unchangeable, and she offered herself a willing sacrifice unto God. After being cruelly baited by a wild cow, she was killed by a gladiator, or Roman prize-fighter.

Thus "many a time from her youth up" was the Church of Christ afflicted; yet He whose mercy endureth for ever remembered His covenant, and suffered not the gates of hell to prevail against her. The present storm was succeeded by a calm of about thirty-eight years, during which period holy missionaries proclaimed the gospel of salvation to heathen nations, the Lord confirming the teaching of His chosen servants by signs and wonders.

CHAPTER X.

CYPRIAN AND HIS TIMES.

AMONG the converts of this time, the name of Cyprian shines conspicuously bright. He was a man of some importance, and lived at Carthage. A presbyter, or priest, named Cæcilius was, under Providence, the instrument of his conversion to Christianity; and Cyprian, to evince his gratitude, prefixed the name of this priest to his own, and was called Cæcilius Cyprian. This was A.D. 246. Two years after this, Cyprian became bishop of Carthage, where he laboured diligently for the gospel of Christ.

In describing the state of his mind before his conversion, he says, it appeared to him "a harsh and difficult thing, that a man should be born again, and that being animated by a new life, by the salutary washing of regeneration (baptism), he should strip himself of what he was before, and though the body remained the same, he should in his mind become altogether a new creature."

He speaks thus : "How can so great a thing be possible," said I, "that a man should suddenly, and at once, put off what nature and habit have confirmed in him? how shall he learn parsimony, who has been accustomed to expensive and magnificent feasts? and how shall he who has been accustomed to purple, gold, and costly attire, condescend to the simplicity of a plebeian habit? But," he adds, "after the filth of my former sins was washed away in the washing of regeneration, and divine light from above had infused itself into my heart, now purified and cleansed, after, through the infusion of the Holy Spirit from heaven, the new birth had made me a new creature, indeed, immediately, and in an amazing manner, doubtful things began to be cleared up; things once shut were opened; dark things shone forth; and what before seemed difficult and even impossible, now appeared easy and practical. I saw that, that which is born of the flesh, and had lived in wickedness, was of the 'earth, earthy;' but that the new life, now animated of the Holy Ghost, began to be of God." This is a plain description of that "death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness," which, in the Church Catechism, is said to be "the inward and spiritual grace" in baptism. To shew the necessity of carefully tending the seed sown, lest it

should be choked with thorns, Cyprian says, "Only, let fear be the guardian of innocence; that the Lord, who kindly shone into our minds with an effusion of heavenly grace, may be detained as our guest, by the steady obedience of the soul that delights in Him; lest pardon received should beget presumption, and the old enemy break in afresh."

Thus, with watchfulness and caution, would he avoid all that might quench the Spirit within, working out salvation "with fear and trembling."

He speaks of the blessedness of religion, and says, that her paths only are the paths of peace, by which we escape from empty pleasures, which, as fellow-workers with Satan, allure the soul from its rock of strength to destroy it. This he says "is the only placid and sound tranquillity; the only solid, firm, and perpetual security is, to be delivered from the tempest of this restless scene, to be stationed in the port of salvation, to lift up the eyes from earth to heaven, and to be admitted into the favour of God."

Cyprian in his time saw much tribulation, for another persecution arose to vex the Church.

From the increase of Christianity, the heathen rulers began to fear that the temples of their false gods would be utterly despoiled and deserted, unless some great effort were

made; and they therefore again attempted to destroy Christianity by punishing with great severity all its professors. Christians were robbed, tortured, and massacred, in every part of the Roman empire.

Cyprian looked on this as one of those chastenings by which the Lord would correct His chosen people: he says, "The Lord would have His family to be tried; and because long peace has corrupted the discipline divinely revealed to us, the heavenly chastisement hath raised up our faith, which had lain almost dormant. Works of mercy were neglected, and discipline was at the lowest ebb. Luxury and effeminacy prevailed; meretricious arts in dress cultivated; fraud and deceit practised among brethren; Christians could unite themselves in matrimony with unbelievers; could swear, not only without reverence, but without truth. With haughty asperity they despised the rulers of the Church . . . because therefore," says Cyprian, "we have despised the Lord's directions, we are obliged to undergo a correction of our multiplied evils, and a trial of our faith, by severe remedies."

Cyprian was himself obliged to retire, to escape from this persecution, employing himself still, however, to the glory of God, and for the good of His Church.

A dreadful pestilence broke out at Car-

thage about this time; and as affliction is a furnace in which the souls of saints are purified, we find, at this unhappy period, many were the good deeds by which the members of the Church shewed the holy and divine spirit by which they were animated; for while the heathens fled, and deserted the sick and afflicted, seeking each his own safety, the followers of the Redeemer became servants to their brethren, and even extended their good offices to those who had persecuted them.

Cyprian, by the example of his own good works, and by his exhortations, encouraged believers in their charity, and bid them rejoice because death was near them, and they might quickly be freed from the assaults of Satan.

Cyprian, returning from his retirement, devoted himself to his church; but he was shortly after seized, by order of the Roman emperor, and beheaded. Many, admiring his calmness and devotion, followed on to see him die, and, as if envying his departure to peace, cried, "Let us die with our holy bishop."

As religion is not a thing which time will alter or improve, but which came perfect from Him who said, "Let there be light, and there was light," it is well to look back and see what were the customs of those who first professed it, and who had received it

from the holy apostles, who were under the guidance of Christ the head.

With regard to baptism, we find it was the custom to administer this sacrament to the infants of Christian parents: that this was universal, appears from a question which arose in this century; it was, Whether infants should be baptised immediately after their birth, or not until the eighth day? circumcision, the type of baptism being performed on the eighth day in the Jewish Church. The rite of confirmation—the laying on of hands, after the example of the apostles—followed baptism. The holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered on every Sabbath-day: offerings, or gifts, were presented before the sacrament was received, according to the custom established by St. Paul in the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 2), when every one, as God had prospered him, was invited to contribute; the collection thus made was left at the disposal of the minister. Christians who had after baptism departed from God by the commission of secret sins, were taught to repent and confess to God, with contrite hearts, and to study to serve Him with renewed diligence, that so their wickedness might be forgiven (Acts viii. 22). Persons who had been guilty of scandalous iniquities, and had publicly disgraced their profession

of Christianity, were not allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. If they submitted to a course of penance, and by prayer, and fasting, and public confession of contrition, shewed their repentance, they were again received; but if they continued impenitent, they were excommunicated. This was a means of preserving purity of life among Christians; for if any man who was called a brother—that is, a Christian—was guilty of any great sin, others of the Church were forbidden to keep company with him, according to the injunction of St. Paul (1 Cor. v. 11). Thus were sinners put to shame, and others were preserved from those evil consequences which generally arise from associating with the ungodly.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PERSECUTION UNDER DIOCLESIAN.

CHRIST, who was Himself the "Man of sorrows," and endured the contradiction of sinners, has taught all who will be His disciples in this world to look for tribulation—to "sow in tears," that they may "reap in joy," and by many afflictions it was that He purified His Church. The heathens, whose hearts were fixed on this present world, constantly rose up to destroy Christianity; their wickedness, and not their ignorance, prevented their turning to God; they loved sinful pleasures, therefore they opposed Him who came to teach them to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." They would shut their eyes against the truth, and against the wonders and miracles by which the messages of God were confirmed; for they "loved darkness rather than light," and "this present evil world" more than God. This was the reason they desired that the voice of the Lord should not be heard

on earth, and why they persecuted all who preached of Christ; the more Christianity spread, the greater were their efforts to stop it.

The persecution which was begun under the Roman emperor Dioclesian, was the tenth which the Church endured; it seemed then as if the rebellious powers of hell combined to make one mighty struggle against the kingdom of the Redeemer; for the malice, and cruelty, and strength then called forth, exceeded every thing we have hitherto noticed. The heathen priests, seeing how the gospel had spread, feared their false religion would be utterly destroyed; they therefore applied to Dioclesian, who, together with Maximian and two others, then ruled the empire. He was very willing to set on foot any measures for the destruction of the Christian religion, for he was of a fierce disposition, and zealous for paganism. He therefore passed a law that all churches should be pulled down, and that all Bibles and religious books should be burnt. He was staying in Nicomedia at the time he began this persecution, and he sent his officers into a large church in that place. This they plundered, and the Scriptures they burnt. The emperor, who watched their proceedings, then thought of setting fire to the building; but he feared that might cause the destruc-

tion of the whole city, so he sent persons with axes, who soon ruined the house of God. Churches were destroyed all over the empire, which then reached over many countries. Many Christians lost their lives because they refused to give up the Bibles to be destroyed. It is wonderful that any copies were preserved in those fearful times. In Sicily, Euplius a martyr, being asked why he kept the Scriptures, forbidden by the emperor; answered, "Because I am a Christian; life eternal is in them: he that gives them up loses eternal life." He was put to death. Marks were set upon some of the Christians to render them infamous, and some of the poorer sort were made slaves.

Shortly after this attack, it happened that a fire broke out in the emperor's palace; the Christians were immediately accused as the authors of it; and Dioclesian, whose hatred against them made him ready to believe any of the falsehoods of their enemies, in consequence of this accident, sent forth a second law, that all Christian bishops and ministers should be cast into prison; that they should be tortured in every possible way; and if upon this they refused to become idolaters, they were to be massacred. It was hoped, if the bishops and priests could by severity be brought to forsake the faith, their flocks would soon follow the example of the shep-

herds. But this snare was broken ; the ministers of God were faithful to their trust, and died in defence of the truth. This ill success only increased the fury of the persecutors ; Christians of all ages and ranks were called upon to renounce their faith and to serve the heathen gods, and magistrates were authorised to use every torture they could invent to force them to do so. They therefore now set upon the flock like wolves on a fold of sheep. They commanded that Christians should be beaten with rods and scourged ; their bodies were stretched on machines and torn with nails ; some died under these tortures, and others, being saved alive, were then called upon to choose which they would do,—whether they would become heathens, or be put to death ; and multitudes chose rather to die than to forsake God. These martyrs were then delivered to the most cruel deaths ; some were thrown to lions and tigers to be devoured ; others were crucified, or beheaded, or thrown into the sea ; and some were roasted to death ; so terrible was the cruelty of the heathens through the whole of the Roman empire. France was the only country where any mercy was shewn. Here Constantius reigned ; he was a mild and just prince, and would not imitate the barbarity of his superiors, and though commanded to do the same, he refrained, contenting himself with destroy-

ing the churches : he commanded his household to renounce Christianity, but he afterwards dismissed those who did so, saying that men who were not faithful to their God were not likely to be true to their prince.

A deacon, named Romanus, supplies an instance of remarkable zeal. He entered the city of Antioch just as the heathens were destroying the churches ; and being grieved to see that some among the Christians, terrified by the sufferings that awaited them, were about to renounce the faith and to acknowledge the false gods, he boldly rebuked their cowardice, and, fearless of the consequences, urged them to stand fast : he was soon seized and condemned, and, after much torture, was strangled.

Another martyr, named Paul, died with great patience and in a truly Christian spirit. After he was condemned, he begged to have a little time allowed him ; this he employed in prayer. He then prayed aloud for the whole Christian world, that God would forgive the sins of His people, remove the present scourge of their iniquities, and restore them to peace and liberty ; he prayed for the Jews, that they might come to God through Jesus Christ ; for blessings upon the Samaritans, and that all nations living in ignorance and error might be brought to know and serve God ; he prayed also for his enemies,

for the judge who had condemned him, for the emperor, and for the executioner who was to put him to death. Those who heard him wept at his great goodness and charity; he composed himself to death, and was beheaded. Many Christians rejoiced to lay down their lives for Christ, and they came and offered themselves freely to their judges, boldly confessing their faith. Sometimes their relations would try to persuade them to renounce the Lord, and save their lives; but they were strengthened to resist this temptation. An ancient historian,¹ who saw their sufferings, and whose account is preserved, says that in Egypt in one day he saw so many executed, some beheaded and others burnt, that the executioners were quite fatigued, and their weapons blunted: he adds, that these holy sufferers met death with the strongest appearance of joy and triumph, and employed themselves even to their last breath in psalms and thanksgiving. "The martyrs fixed sincerely the eye of their mind on the supreme God, and cheerfully embracing death for the sake of godliness, held fast their profession; knowing that our Lord Jesus Christ was made man for us, that He might cut off all sin, and afford us the necessary preparatives for an entrance into eternal life. Coveting the best gifts, the martyrs who carried

¹ Eusebius.

Christ within, underwent all sorts of tortures once and again; and while the guards insulted them in word and deed, they were preserved serene, and unbroken in spirit, because ‘perfect love casteth out fear.’” Thus, by their constancy, did the early Christians affirm before men, that they were strangers and pilgrims seeking a better country; they faithfully adhered to a religion which required them to renounce father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and their own lives also; for they knew that He is faithful who hath said, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

Yet although, in this trying time, we find many noble examples, there was generally a decline from that holy severity of life, which appeared in the Church at an earlier period; and many Christians considered their present troubles as the chastening of God, who often by sorrow weans the souls of His servants from this world, that they may the more diligently seek His kingdom of heaven.

This persecution, the most terrible the Church had ever endured, gradually died away after the death of Dioclesian, which took place in the year 312.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHURCH IN THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT.

THE furious storm of Dioclesian's persecution having passed away, it pleased God to send peaceful days to His Church; and the prophecy, that kings should be her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers, began to be fulfilled: the emperor Constantine turned from the idolatry hitherto followed by the Roman emperors, and exerted his great power in favour of the Christian religion. The father of this emperor, though not a Christian, was yet inclined to favour their teaching; he had a great number of Christians among his servants and attendants; and it is probable Constantine might have heard from them of the true God. His conversion to Christianity is attributed to his having seen a miraculous cross. It is said that being on his march against a powerful enemy, and much depressed with a sense of danger, and feeling the need in which he stood of the protection of Heaven, he called upon the God of the Christians; and imme-

diately a bright cross appeared above the sun, and the words, "Conquer by this," were visible. It does not, however, appear that he became from that time a true Christian; he seemed at first inclined to allow Christianity to exist on an equal footing with idolatry, from the false notion that all creeds likely to promote order and morality are equally good; but being desirous to learn, he submitted himself to the instructions of the bishops of the Church, and devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures; by these means he arrived at a sounder faith, and became convinced that there is but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," for the salvation of souls; and he resolved to spread the good influence of this only holy religion through his empire. Those, therefore, who had for so long a season suffered persecutions were now protected and refreshed; the bishops and ministers were treated with the respect due to the ambassadors of God. The emperor constantly received them at his palace, and required their attendance during his journeys. So the voice of thanksgiving was again heard; Christians were no longer obliged to fly to caves, and to celebrate their services in hidden corners; but beautiful temples were constructed, and public worship performed without fear of interruption.

This happy state of things, however, did

not extend to the eastern part of the empire, which was under the sway of Licinius; that commander, influenced by the murmurs of the pagan priests, who were much incensed to see the temples of their gods forsaken, determined to check the growing power of the Christians; he, therefore, forbade any bishop to go into the houses of the heathens, lest they should be converted. He dismissed all from his army who refused to sacrifice to the false gods, and renewed the cruelties practised in the former persecutions; having thus enlisted on his side all who were yet cleaving to their idols, he engaged in a war with Constantine, by whom he was defeated; and his death put an end to the sufferings of the Christians.

Constantine, now sole head of an immense empire, exerted all his authority to destroy superstition, and to establish Christianity; and he commanded all those who were governors of other countries under him, to use every method for promoting the true faith: yet, as it becomes not the members of Christ's Church to do evil that good may come, no cruelty was used to force men to be Christians; prayers and arguments, the true weapons of Christ's soldiers, alone were employed against the power of the enemy, and those who refused to hear were left to their vain idols; the emperor said, he

doubted not the whole world might be persuaded to believe, but the power and habit of inveterate error prevented the reformation of mankind. He therefore endeavoured to promote the instruction of his people, by commanding the governors of provinces to erect, enlarge, and beautify churches at his cost; and splendid churches arose accordingly in all parts of his empire. Finding, however, these mild measures ineffectual, he commanded that the temples should be entered, the roofs torn off, and the images thrown down: some of the priests themselves exposed their deities to the common people. The idols of the heathens were drawn up and down the streets, to shew the people how helpless their gods were, and that those on whom they had so vainly called were but the work of men's hands; some of them, being of gold, were melted down and coined into money. Constantine took care to enforce the due observance of the Sabbath; he commanded it should be set apart for prayer, and the public services performed in the churches by the ministers; and he set a good example by attending with his commanders and officers on the usual devotions of that day; he also ordered that Friday, the day on which our Saviour died for sin, should be a day of fasting and humiliation.

Saints' days were kept at this period, and

the fast of Lent was also observed; and yet, the fasting of this time was less severe than that formerly exercised; for, instead of abstaining entirely from food, it was considered sufficient to abstain from wine and flesh only. Certain days were appointed to be kept holy; of these there were five, namely, Christmas-day, or the day of Christ's birth; Good Friday, the day on which He was crucified; Easter-day, or the day of His resurrection; Ascension-day, when we commemorate His ascension into heaven; and Whit-Sunday, when the Holy Ghost was poured out on Christ's Church. The fourteen days appointed in remembrance of Christ's resurrection were much observed. At this period, it was customary to administer the sacrament of baptism at only two seasons, namely, at Easter and Whit-Sunday; and the latter was called Whit, or White Sunday, because those who were admitted into the Church by baptism were clad in white. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was received by all the congregation on every Lord's day, and some partook of it two or three times in the week; for Christians did not then despise the mercy of the Lord, and turn away from this spiritual feast, as they do in these times. Baptismal fonts were placed in the porch of each church; before this, baptism had been performed by

the bank of some stream. These fonts were placed in the porch to signify that as we enter the house of prayer by the porch, so we enter God's church by baptism.

Constantine in the beginning of his reign lived at Rome; he, however, resolved, for some reason not known, to change the seat of the empire to Byzantium, which he greatly enlarged and beautified, and also erected there many glorious churches; he commanded it should be named New Rome; but, in honour of his name, it was called Constantinople.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NICENE CREED.

THE Church, though now under the protection of the Roman emperors, and freed from the assaults of heathen persecutors, had still much to contend against. False teachers spread pernicious heresies and divisions through Christendom, and by their new doctrines destroyed the peace of the Church, and interrupted that brotherly love, which all who sincerely endeavour to be obedient to Christ will strive to cultivate. In all ages we find true believers subject to temptations to desert the "one faith" and "one fold," to which they have been called. Even in the apostles' times there were parties and divisions; yet the faithful, though often "persecuted," were "not forsaken;" and the Church, though "cast down," was "not destroyed," because the Saviour had promised to be with her "unto the end of the world." A man named Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, now put forth unsound doctrines respecting the Trinity, denying that the Son

Jesus Christ was from everlasting like God. The errors of this man were like those of the Unitarians and Socinians of the present day. No heresy has so frequently harassed the Church of Christ. The mystery of the Trinity has ever been a stumbling-block. Men have been led away by too high an opinion of human reason, and have endeavoured to measure the revealed truths of religion by this short standard, instead of "receiving with meekness the engrafted word," and humbly submitting their reason to those articles of faith which are altogether above its reach. Arius was a man whose talents and religious life gained much respect, and he led away many from the Church. Such as are weak in the faith are often led astray by their admiration for the religious severity and blameless lives of men who are labouring to propagate some new creed; but we should remember that we are saved by faith; and the most moral, without a saving faith, will come short of the glory of God. We must not allow our admiration for the holy lives of such as separate from the Church, to blind us as to the fact that separation is a grievous sin. Whenever we join in the litany of our Church, we pray God to deliver us from all "false doctrine, heresy, and schism;" and how can we, after this, consistently treat it as a small matter, or suppose we obey the dictates of

charity, when we look with equal complacency upon the truth of God and the invention of man? Arius and his doctrines were condemned by the Council of Nice. It was the custom in the Church, from the earliest times, to hold councils, or meetings, of the bishops and heads of the Church. A council was held at Jerusalem in the times of the apostles, when dissensions and differences had arisen respecting circumcision. "The apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter (Acts xv. 6). It was always to consider some matter of doctrine or discipline that the bishops were called together in councils. Some of these councils were of larger, and some of smaller size. The heads of the Church in one province only were assembled sometimes; in some councils the heads of the Church in one nation; but on some occasions there was a general assembly of all the bishops and heads of the Church from all countries. These last were called œcumenical councils; that is, councils of all the inhabited parts of the earth; and all the bishops in Christendom were invited to them. Six œcumenical, or Catholic councils, were held during the period between the year A.D. 320 and 680. That held at Nice, in Asia, A.D. 325, which condemned the errors of Arius, consisted of three hundred and eighteen bishops. A creed, called the Nicene

creed (from the name of the place, Nice), was drawn up. It is that used in the Communion-service, beginning, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." It insists particularly on the divinity of our Saviour: the latter part of it was drawn up at Constantinople; it is therefore sometimes called the Constantinopolitan creed. The creed called the Apostles' Creed is so named, not because it was put forth in its present form by the apostles, but because it contains the substance of an ancient creed used in the Church. There is another creed, called the Creed of St. Athanasius; it is named after him, not because he wrote it, but because it sets forth those truths for which he earnestly contended. These three creeds are received by the Romish, Greek, and English Churches. The Nicene creed was approved by the whole Church at that time throughout the world; and the party infected with the false doctrines of Arius submitted. Yet the poison still continued to exist; and, after a time, the Arians again fomenting dissensions, attacked the true faith, and being supported by the emperors of Rome, they persecuted the Catholic Church with a degree of cruelty almost equal to that of the pagans. Athanasius was the particular object of their hatred; for those who are foremost in the battle are the most

exposed to the weapons of the enemy. Being bishop of Alexandria, he refused to receive Arius into communion; to revenge this, the party accused him to the emperor. Among other crimes with which he was falsely charged, it was said he had put to death one of his clergy; and a hand was produced, which it was stated belonged to the murdered man. Athanasius was able to prove his innocence; and the malice of his enemies was made evident, by the appearance of the person whom he was accused of murdering. After many providential escapes, Athanasius was obliged to fly for concealment to a dark cavern; here he remained till the place of his retreat was made known by his treacherous attendant; but God warned him of his danger, and his enemies were again disappointed of their prey: indeed, the good man, and bold champion of the Catholic faith, had so many wonderful escapes, that the Arians and heathens said he practised magic.

This terrible heresy continued to trouble the Church for fifty years; the leaders of it managed to draw up their creeds in such an artful way, that the unwary were deluded into assenting to them, not understanding what mischief they contained; yet, at last, the truth burst forth; the Nicene creed was confirmed and received, and the errors taught by Arius and his followers disappeared.

In the time of persecution, Athanasius found safety among the monks of Egypt. These monks were persons who had retired from the world, and devoted themselves to all the holy exercises of religion. We are apt to condemn all who bear this name, because some monks of modern times, like some nominal Christians of modern times, have given themselves up to luxury and pleasure. Yet it was not always so with them. Persons, even from the age in which the apostles lived on earth, had often retired and lived in seclusion, because they would serve God without distraction. Monasteries, such as that to which Athanasius fled, did not exist much before his time. Anthony, who was born in Egypt, 251, lived a solitary life, and was so remarkable for his sanctity and devotion, that others were induced to follow his example; and many holy men withdrew from the turmoil of this busy world, to prepare for the peace and holiness of heaven: here they lived in a very simple way, being content with coarse and common food and raiment, and devoting themselves to draw near unto God; and if any grew weary of this manner of life, he was free to depart and return to society,—for they had not bound themselves by any vows.

Anthony supported himself in his solitude by labour; and whatever he had more than

his own simple wants required, he gave to the poor. He was the friend of Athanasius, and was induced by him to go to Alexandria to declare against the errors of the Arians.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRYSOSTOM AND HIS TIMES.

THE gospel, no longer opposed by the Roman emperors, continued to spread ; but this outwardly prosperous state of the Church was attended with some dangers. Missionaries, eager to enrol new converts, were too hasty in their measures ; and instead of preparing the way for Christ by teaching men to forsake their idols, and to bring forth “ fruits meet for repentance,” they rather grafted on and mixed Christianity with idolatry, and thus its purity was corrupted. Some received the faith because it was countenanced by their rulers ; and joined the Church of Christ, not that they desired to live unto Christ, but to recommend themselves to those in power—they had not counted the cost, nor made up their minds to forsake all and bear the cross ; so while the Church increased in numbers, its godliness declined. Yet in these times lived many holy men, who opposed themselves to the floods of impiety, and warned

the wanderers from God to repent and return to Him, that their souls might be saved.

Among such was John, surnamed Chrysostom, or the golden-mouthed, on account of his eloquence. He had such great abilities for speaking, that in his youth he had intended pleading at the bar; but, growing weary of this kind of life, he began to think more of a better world, and to read the holy Scriptures: that he might study them without interruption, he betook himself to the mountains. Here he met an old hermit, who lived alone, praising God in the wilderness, and living in great sanctity and strictness. Chrysostom joined this old man, and remained with him four years, during which time he studied religion; and he afterwards retired to perfect solitude, living in a little cell, and practising such severe self-denial and abstinence, as in some degree injured his health; so, finding his infirmities increase, he forsook his retirement, and went to the city of Antioch, where he laboured as a priest. Antioch was a fine large city, containing 200,000 inhabitants, half of whom were Christians. The people were great lovers of pleasure, and very much addicted to the follies and vanities so commonly seen in populous towns. It happened that the emperor of Rome, to pay the expenses of his wars, had put on heavy taxes, and the citi-

zens of Antioch were called upon to bear their part. At this they were greatly enraged, and breaking out into open sedition, refused to submit to the imposition. In the madness of the tumult they seized the statue, or image, of the emperor, and dragged it about the streets in contempt. After the excitement had a little passed off, they began to reflect on the probable consequences of their disobedience. Knowing that they deserved the anger of the emperor, and that he was not likely to spare them, they were in a state of great alarm and distress. Chrysostom was not backward in pointing out the sinfulness of resisting the powers set over them; he exhorted them to repentance, using hymns and litanies composed for the occasion; and many who, in the days of mirth and prosperity, had forgotten God, and forsaken His house, now turned to Him as the only refuge in time of danger. The bishop, Flavian, undertook to go to the emperor, to plead with him for forgiveness; his message was received with great mildness, for the emperor confessed, that if the great Lord of the world, for our sakes, became a servant, and prayed for his murderers, it becomes those who are His, to forgive their fellow-servants. So he sent Flavian home with good news to the terrified people.

Chrysostom afterwards became bishop of

Constantinople; this was a station of great dignity. The emperors resided in that city, and therefore its bishops had a place among the first rulers of the Church. Chrysostom made a good use of his power; great crowds flocked to hear him preach; and sometimes they would clap their hands, and by other disorderly actions testify their approbation of what he said. This was one of the evil practices of the time; and Chrysostom, instead of being pleased to see that he was admired, endeavoured to put a stop to this foolish and unbecoming conduct. He did not wish people to listen to him as if he were a stage-player seeking to please them, but that they should attend with all sobriety as to one appointed by God to teach them to prepare for the judgment to come. Some dissenters were brought by him to join the Catholic Church; and his good example and labours were effectual in restraining the growing vices of his day. He was a faithful steward over God's household, reproofing and rebuking with all authority. During the season of Lent, he preached every day; it was his custom to do so constantly two or three days in the week, and daily to attend the services of the Church. His ill health he lamented, more on account of its rendering him unable to attend on these things, than for the sufferings of sickness. He was very severe against

those clergymen who neglected the work of the ministry. Such men are in all times stumbling-blocks to weak believers, who have not learnt their whole duty as Christians and members of God's Church, and do not reflect that they are bound to continue faithful to that Church, because God has appointed it as a means of salvation to them. Such are often tempted to desert it when they see among its ministers persons who, having no sense of their responsibility before God, live on in a worldly, careless manner. Men of this sort Chrysostom severely reprimanded; and if they did not reform their lives, and set a good example, they were suspended, being counted altogether unworthy to be among the "fellow-labourers with God." Chrysostom used to live in a very simple, plain way; and some even blamed him for seeing no guests at his table. But as he dwelt among a people notorious for the sin of spending enormous sums upon costly feasts, he might have thought it well to abstain entirely from every thing of the kind, and rather to fall into the contrary extreme, in order to reform the inhabitants: he desired to teach the rich people that they were the stewards of God, and that it was sinful to waste His good gifts upon luxury and vanity; that they ought to retrench their expenses, that they might have something to

give to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked among their brethren. He was so often teaching men to be charitable, and to give their money away, that he used to be called John the almoner, or beggar of charities. And he also exhorted men, who were prevented by business from attending the daily services, to go to church at night; for at that time praises and prayers were offered constantly in the church, and services were performed by persons who succeeded each other without interruption. He warned Christians against frequenting play-houses, and places of public amusement, lest, by mixing themselves up with sinners, they should lose their purity of heart, and so defile the temple of the Holy Ghost. Games of chance he condemned, as being occasions when men are tempted into blasphemies, anger, quarrels, and all sorts of crimes.

Chrysostom was very zealous in promoting the conversion of the heathen; and hearing that in Phenice (a neighbouring country) many served idols, he sent a body of clergy there; some religious women of Constantinople agreeing to pay all the expenses of this enterprise. Many efforts were made, at this time, to spread the knowledge of the gospel. Theodosius, the Roman emperor, was remarkable for his activity in the cause; he caused heathen temples to be destroyed,

or purified and dedicated to Christ and His saints. It was about this time that the conversion of the Irish was attempted by Celestine, bishop of Rome. He first sent Palladius forth on this work; he laboured very diligently, but seemingly with little success. In 432, a native of Scotland arrived among them; his name was changed to Patrick: his memory is greatly revered among the Irish, for he was very successful in converting them to Christianity: by him the archbishopric of Armagh was founded.

The boldness with which Chrysostom endeavoured to reform his people soon procured him many enemies. Among these was Eudoxia, the empress, a woman of haughty temper, who submitted not to be rebuked, even by the servant of God, and so was much incensed to find that her sins met with no indulgence. He had also offended Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, by taking part with some monks whom he had oppressed. This prelate, and the empress Eudoxia, therefore joined in working his ruin. Theophilus held a meeting, in which Chrysostom, being falsely accused by his enemies, was deposed from his bishopric. When he beheld how many were leagued against him, he knew he should meet with no justice, and prepared for his departure, by exhorting his bishops to be patient, and

to labour with all quietness among the people; "For, as was St. Paul's case," said he, "I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I see I must undergo many hardships, and then quit this troublesome life." "I always told you life was a road in which joys and sorrows both march hastily away;" and to reconcile them to his departure, he shewed them that God never left His Church without guides, saying, "As for this doctrine of Christ, it began not with me, nor shall it die with me;" and he pointed out how, at Moses' death, a guide was still provided for the chosen people, and Joshua was sent; and, in like manner, after Paul, Timothy, Titus, and Apollos.

The people of Constantinople entertained a great affection for their bishop; so they were full of sorrow when they found his enemies had prevailed against him. They therefore surrounded the emperor's palace, making complaints and lamentations; and Chrysostom was again restored to his bishopric by a synod of sixty bishops. After his restoration, he continued with the same boldness, condemning vice, without respecting the persons of men; and again he excited the anger of the empress. It was usual in those days to place statues of the emperors in the city; a silver statue of the empress

had been set up in this way in Constantinople, close by the door of the great church, St. Sophia. Here the people used to assemble and perform their heathen rites around the figure, and by their extravagancies they disturbed the congregation of Christians in the church. Chrysostom endeavoured to stop this, at which the empress was highly offended; his enemies, who were watching for their prey, perceived this, and resolved to take this opportunity to work his ruin. He was no longer allowed to act as bishop in that city; and his friends, who took his part, were unmercifully used, robbed and killed, or imprisoned: being thus deposed, he was conveyed to Cucusus, in Armenia,—a very cold barren spot, and infested with robbers. Here he still found comfort; many gathered round him, and sympathised in his misfortunes, and people were glad to listen to his instructions. A good lady, named Olympias, having received much benefit from his advice in spiritual things, supplied all his wants; and once, when a terrible famine appeared, Chrysostom was enabled by her charity to minister to the wants of the poor and afflicted, and to help them in their distress. His enemies were grieved to see him so kindly treated, so they ordered him to be taken to a place on the very shore of the Black Sea. While on the road thither, he felt himself fatigued

and ill, and begged to be permitted to rest: this his guards refused; but they were unable to press him on much farther; for by the time they had gone four miles, he became so much worse, that they were obliged to retire to an oratory; here he received the Lord's supper, and making his last prayer before them all, he gave glory to God for all events, and died.

At the end of the morning service there is a prayer called the prayer of St. Chrysostom; it was daily used in his liturgies, or public services, and it is generally agreed that he wrote it.

CHAPTER XV.

GREGORY THE GREAT AND HIS TIMES.

GREGORY, surnamed the Great, was born of noble parents, and was promoted by the emperor Justin II. to govern the city of Rome; this honour he resigned, bestowing all his wealth for the good of the Church. He devoted himself wholly to the service of God; and, to avoid the temptations of the world, retired to a monastery. There he lived in great tranquillity, delighting to pass his time in prayers and praises, and in doing all those charitable offices in which the Holy Spirit teaches faithful Christians to find pleasure. He was induced, however, by the bishop of Rome, to leave his retirement, and undertake an office of usefulness in the Church. He was very sorry to quit his quiet monastery, and to find his mind turned from heavenly contemplations, by a necessary attention to worldly things. He felt, he said, like one tossed on a tempestuous ocean, and his great comfort was the society of those holy men who, like himself, were

striving to prepare themselves for the kingdom of heaven ; with these he could hold communion ; they would search the Scriptures together, and enjoy that affection and sympathy known only among fellow-citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem—the saints of God ; those who, travelling on here in loneliness, like persons journeying through a foreign country, rejoice when they meet with one of their own band, bent on the same way, who can tell them of all those things of which they long to hear.

During the time that Gregory laboured at Rome as a minister of the gospel, a dreadful plague broke out, by which a great number of the inhabitants were destroyed ; whole families were swept off at once. Gregory taught the people to look upon this affliction as a punishment sent from God to call men to repentance ; he pointed out how swiftly men were hurried away : “ Let each of us,” said he, “ repent while we have time to weep, before the sword devour us. Let us call our ways to remembrance.” He appointed a solemn litany, or form of supplication ; this was performed by seven companies, into which he divided the people of Rome ; they came forth from the several churches, and uniting in one body, made a public demonstration of their dependence upon God’s mercy. Among those who fell

a sacrifice to this infectious disease, was the bishop of Rome. The admiration with which the piety of Gregory had been regarded, made all desire to see him appointed as successor; but like most men of real goodness, Gregory was very humble; he had a low opinion of his own merits, and thought he was quite unworthy to be one of the shepherds of Christ's fold; for he thought it was no small thing to have the charge of men's souls. Besides this, the bishops of Rome had a heavy burden to bear; the bishopric was very large, and they, with the heads of the Church at Constantinople, were considered the most eminent among the clergy,—so that Gregory would willingly have avoided this high dignity, and for that purpose he escaped privately from Rome, and hid himself in a cave. But the people would not be disappointed; and in the year 590, he was drawn from his retreat, and placed at the head of that Church.

His conduct afterwards proved he had not declined this arduous post because he did not love to labour in the Lord's vineyard; for though constantly suffering from illness, his exertions to promote the glory of God, and to extend His Church, were unremitting. He earnestly desired to see Chris-

tians serving God with their former piety, and he studied to bring them to order and obedience. With this object, he encouraged the clergy to devote themselves entirely to the duties of their high calling. As men separated doubly—namely, by baptism and ordination—to the service of God, he desired them to give themselves up to the gospel of Christ, and to the affairs of the Church; that they should relieve the poor; call sinners back to be obedient children of God; to warn all against the temptations of false teachers; to be simple and plain in their own way of living; that in their entertainments, when they met together, no absent person should be slandered, and none turned into ridicule; matters of business were to be avoided, and the Scriptures read; that the refreshment provided on such occasions should be plain, and not more than was necessary. Thus he taught them to be examples to their flocks, and to be humble before God. On one occasion, hearing a person boast how much good he had done, he checked him, saying, he loved indeed to hear of works of mercy; but added, “What are we, dust and ashes, that we should covet the praises of men? Him you should seek to please, whose coming we expect, and whose retribution will know no end.” His zealous labours, and

the blessed example of his holy life, checked the wickedness of the times, and procured the respect of all good men.

A lady named Gregoria, who lived in the palace of the empress Augusta, a religious person, wrote to Gregory, asking him whether her sins were forgiven. This question was quite unreasonable, since God has nowhere taught us to depend on or expect immediate revelations of His will in each case that may arise. So Gregory told her it was not possible to attain certainty on such a matter; that we must repent and mourn over sin, and apply to God for pardon; that he was unworthy to receive a special message from God on the matter.

About this time, Italy, the country of which Rome is the capital city, was greatly exposed to the ravages of a barbarous people, called Lombards; together with other German nations, they had invaded that country in the year 568, and had made themselves masters of the whole land, Rome and Ravenna only excepted: they were pagans, and the Christian people suffered much from their ferocity. In Gregory's time they were threatening to extend their dominion still farther; he therefore instructed the clergy to supplicate the Lord in public services every fourth and sixth day, and to teach the people the duty of attending these services; "For if,"

said he, "the gracious Lord behold us loving His commands, He is able to defend us from the enemy, and to prepare eternal joys for us." These Lombards afterwards joined the Catholic Church; and Gregory wrote a letter to their queen, congratulating her on the happy event.

Much was done in Gregory's time among the unbelieving Jews, and many were persuaded to believe in Christ. Some of those engaged in the work of converting them seem, however, to have been ignorant "what manner of spirit they were of," for they were found using violence instead of persuasion, and compelling some to join the Church before they had been converted, or desired to do so. Some Jews they even dragged forcibly to baptism. Men must believe before they can enter the Church; their not wishing to enter it was a proof they did not believe. These teachers therefore were proceeding in an improper manner, and Gregory reprov'd their conduct, reminding such, that severity is not to be used in bringing men to God; that the sweetness of the gospel, and the love of what they hear, should lead them to desire to be changed, and to be admitted into the Church.

Christianity continued to spread, and a great number of churches were built. About this time, a monk named Columbus preached the

gospel with great success in Scotland. But the event of peculiar interest to the English is, the mission planned by this good bishop to England. In those barbarous times, the slave-trade was carried on to a great extent: children were taken from England, and sold in the market at Rome. Gregory happening to be present when some of these were offered for sale, was much struck by their appearance; and inquiring who they were, found they had been brought from England, and that they were pagans. So it entered into his heart to send a holy minister to preach the gospel there; and a monk named Augustine was appointed to this good work.

The gospel had been preached in England many hundred years before the event now mentioned, and the Church then planted continued to exist; therefore, before we follow the story of Augustine, we will see what had occurred in the ancient British Church.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH.

WE have hitherto taken a view of the Church generally, or rather of the primitive Church, — that is, the Church of Christ for the first few hundred years : we shall now speak of the Church in England ; but, it must not be forgotten, we are not looking at the whole Church, but at one branch of the whole, or of the Catholic Church. It is sometimes supposed that the word *catholic* applies exclusively to the Romanists ; but persons who think thus cannot rightly understand the meaning of the term. Catholic means universal, or general ; for example, St. James wrote an epistle which was not, like St. Paul's epistles, directed especially to one Church, as to the Church at Rome, or at Ephesus, but which was addressed to all Churches ; it is called the general, or catholic, epistle of St. James. The Greek word applied to this epistle, which we translate general, is the same that is applied to the Church where

we call it Catholic Church. The Church of England is one Church, belonging to the general, or catholic body; just as one branch is a part of a tree, and not the whole tree, being of the same sort of wood as the other branches. All churches, in all times and in all countries, are of the same stock; and all united form the catholic body of Christians. The Church of Christ at Corinth, to whom St. Paul wrote, was one member of this body; the Church of Christ in England is another, —both being of the household of God.

We have seen that the Church of England rose from a foundation laid by the apostles; for although we cannot certainly say by whom the seeds of life were scattered on our barbarous shores, yet we know that Christianity was preached here during the lives of the apostles. The country now called England was then named Britannia. The inhabitants used to paint themselves and their shields with blue; from thence they were called Briths (or painted); and this is thought by some to be the origin of the name Britain. They lived in cottages, and kept flocks, clothing themselves with the skins of beasts taken in the chase. Their religion, as has been seen, was gross superstition, and its priests were called Druids. The Romans, then the most powerful nation on earth, hearing of the fertility and beauty of this land, determined to

make themselves masters of it. They accordingly sent their troops into the country, and, conquering the inhabitants, made themselves masters of the island. They destroyed the ancient religion, and set up their own, which was as bad. This was before the preaching of Christianity; but before the end of the first century, an apostolic church was planted, which, like all the other churches, was Episcopal,—that is, it was under the government of bishops. Little is known of the first three hundred years. Books then were seldom written, and it was difficult to multiply copies when they were written; for as yet there was no other means but the laborious plan of transcribing. Besides, many books were destroyed by barbarians, who at different times ravaged this land; and as they were not able to read the writings, it is not likely they should have taken the trouble to save them from the destruction they brought upon other things.

The first church built in this land for the service of God is said to have been that at Glastonbury, in Somersetshire. The beautiful ruins are still standing between Bridgwater and Wells; and enough remains to bear witness to us of the piety of our forefathers; for we can still see that it must have been a magnificent building. But you must not suppose it was so grand from the first. No doubt

the Christians did their best then, when they raised a house for God ; but people were not so well acquainted with the arts as they are now, and they could not have produced such an edifice. It has been rebuilt at different periods, as many other churches have. Christians, from the time of Christ, were accustomed to assemble in one stated place for public worship (Acts i. 13, 14). An upper room is mentioned as the place in which the disciples all continued with one accord in prayer; and in the second chapter of the Acts, first verse, it is said, the Christians were all with one accord in one place on the day of Pentecost. Besides this, the historians of early times state, it was the custom for Christians to assemble in one place for public worship. They were not able to build churches much at first, because they were robbed and persecuted by the kings and rulers ; but in the reign of the Emperor Constantine they were allowed more liberty, and they built very splendid churches, to which they contributed with the greatest liberality. And in this respect we certainly ought to do our best to imitate them ; for although God dwelling in heaven has no need of such things as we can offer, yet as we receive all from Him, we should delight to testify our thankfulness and our love to Him, by a sacrifice of the best of our possessions. We know that

David, who is a good example, would not offer unto God a gift which cost him nothing (2 Sam. xxiv. 24). We find on many occasions, when the Jews returned from idolatry, and when revivals of pure religion took place, immediately the people began to offer abundantly, and riches poured in to the temple of the Lord (2 Chron. xxxi. 5-7; xxiv. 8-12; xv. 18). Besides, in our service of God we are not left to reason as to what is likely to be pleasing or acceptable,—we serve Him acceptably when we obey His word; and He has commanded us to “honour” Him with our substance, and with the first-fruits of all our “increase;” and has attached a blessing to the command, saying, “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses with new wine” (Prov. iii. 9, 10).

The British Church did not escape the general persecution under the Emperor Dioclesian, A.D. 303 (see Chapter XI.). An ancient historian,¹ in speaking of the British martyrs, says, “God, in His great mercy, willing that all men should be saved, fortified the martyrs with extraordinary courage, and raised them to a noble instance of perseverance.” Aaron and Julius of Caerleon, with others, both men and women, endured great tortures, being torn limb from limb, or suffering such other cruel deaths, as the malice

¹ Gildas.

of their enemies could invent: some hid away in woods and caves, where they continued till God was pleased to avenge their usage upon their persecutors, and afford better times to His Church.

There was a man named Alban; he was an officer of the Roman troops, and lived in this country, at Verulam; he was a heathen, but had hospitably received a Christian priest, who had fled to him for refuge during the persecution. It appears that this priest was a very pious Christian; he passed a great part of his days and nights in prayer, and, by his holy conversation, so adorned the doctrine of Christ our Saviour, that he greatly won upon his host, who became a Christian. The Roman persecutors heard of the retreat of the priest, and sent to Alban's house to take him. Alban, however, determined to make an effort to save the life of his teacher, even at the risk of losing his own; he accordingly dressed himself in the priest's clothes; and the persecutors, being misled by this, seized him. The heathen were extremely enraged when the mistake was discovered, requiring Alban to sacrifice to their gods, and threatening to put him to death if he refused. He replied, that the worship of idols was a homage to devils; and, continuing steadfast in the faith, patiently endured martyrdom. The soldier who was appointed to put him to death

was so impressed with the example of his piety, that he requested he might share his fate, and they died together. A church and an abbey were built on the spot; and the town is called St. Alban's, in memory of this martyr. In the Prayer-book the name is to be found in the calendar on the 17th of June, the day on which he suffered.

Pelagius, or Morgan, a native of Wales, was a monk at Bangor. He put forth some erroneous doctrines, teaching we are able to be righteous of ourselves, without the assistance of divine grace. The British bishops, finding these errors gain ground, sent into Gaul (now called France) for learned men to assist in opposing the corruption of the truth. St. Germain and Lupus accordingly came over on this occasion, a public council was held at Verulam A.D. 429, and the errors of Pelagius were condemned.

The power of Rome, which had so long trampled on other states, had now fallen; riches reaped in other lands, and heaped together, had corrupted the people; the rulers had become vicious and tyrannical, and were unable to keep the forces of the empire combined under them. Rome had been taken by Alaric, king of the Goths, 410; yet the empire, though greatly weakened, was not utterly ruined. The nations they had brought into subjection now seeing that the power of

their masters was beginning to fail, rose to throw off their chains. Thus the Romans, having many wars to carry on, were unable any longer to supply soldiers to Britain, which country they therefore abandoned, A.D. 430. The people of Britain were a helpless race: the young men had been taken as soldiers by the Romans; and those who remained, having always been accustomed to look to their conquerors for defence, were unable to drive back their enemies. The consequence was, they were constantly attacked by the Picts and Scots, who came from the north; and, in their distress, the Britons sent to the Saxons for help against these northern barbarians.

The Saxons were a warlike people, who inhabited Germany; they listened to the entreaties of the Britons, and sent two brothers, Hengist and Horsa, with an army against the Picts and Scots, who were subdued by them; and Britain was thus freed from their depredations. However, the Saxons themselves soon became worse enemies than the Picts had been. They felt very unwilling to leave a country offering so many advantages; and, without much difficulty, established themselves as its masters. Being heathens, they made sad havoc with the Church. They worshipped idols of various forms; one idol of theirs had many heads, by which they

meant to shew their belief in a God who knows and sees all things. From the Saxons we derive some of our words; and the names of the days of the week are taken from their idolatrous observances. Sunday is so called because the sun was worshipped on that day; Monday was the day on which the moon was worshipped; Tuesday was so called from Tuisco; Wednesday was Woden's day; Thursday was Thor's day; Friday was Friga's day; Saturday was Sæter's day. The Saxons divided the country into seven kingdoms, called the Saxon heptarchy; that is, seven governments or kingdoms. The children observed by Gregory in the market at Rome were of this nation, and it was to convert them that Augustine was sent.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MISSION OF AUGUSTINE, AND THE EARLY ENGLISH CHURCH.

AUGUSTINE, being commissioned by Gregory the Great, set forth on his mission to Britain; but as he passed through France in his way thither, he heard such accounts of the people as almost induced him to abandon the enterprise as hopeless. Encouraged, however, by Gregory, he proceeded; and in 597 he landed in the Isle of Thanet, where he was favourably received by Ethelbert. This prince had married Bertha, daughter of Charibert, king of France, a Christian lady. On her marriage it was agreed that she should be allowed to continue in her own religion; and she brought with her from France a bishop to instruct her in her faith. She also had for her own use a church, called St. Martin le Tours, which is still preserved. Ethelbert, the king, was a heathen, and knew little of Christianity: he thought it necessary to meet these missionaries first in the open air, lest they should overpower him by magic spells. Augustine, with his company of priests—for

there were forty with him—approached the king. They bore a silver cross, and a painting of our Saviour. This was perhaps as judicious a way of proceeding as could have been devised; the eye of the barbarian was more likely to be struck by these appearances, and thus he might have been more quickly won than by an appeal to his understanding. Having arrested his attention, the missionaries opened their cause, telling of Christ the Lamb of God, who died to take away the sins of the world, and of that rest which remaineth for His people. The king, if not almost persuaded to be a Christian, yet permitted the holy missionaries to preach the gospel. He promised them friendly entertainment, and forbid them not to convert and bring over whomsoever they could; and allowed them to take up their abode at Canterbury. They walked into that place in solemn procession; and as they went, it is said they chanted these words:—"We pray Thee, O Lord, of Thy great mercy, let Thine anger and fury be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, though we have sinned against Thee." "Praised be Thy name, O Lord." The king and multitudes of the people embraced the faith; and Augustine was consecrated first bishop of Canterbury, where a cathedral, a house for the bishop, and a monastery, were built.

The ancient British Church, of which an account has been given, continued to exist at this period. Augustine invited its bishops to confer with him. It appears that the meeting took place in the open air, and probably under some tree, as the spot was called Augustine's Oak. Augustine proposed to the bishops that they should conform to some customs of the Church of Rome, particularly as to the time of keeping Easter. The British bishops, however, refused to submit to the bishop of Rome, being perfectly independent of all foreign bishops.

Christianity found its way into each of the seven kingdoms into which England was at that time divided. Sebert, king of Essex, received the gospel from Mellitus, whom Gregory sent over to assist Augustine, and who became bishop of London. St. Paul's church was erected for this bishop. The cathedral still bearing that name stands on the ground upon which the ancient building was raised. The conversion of the kingdom of Northumbria was begun under Paulinus, another missionary sent by Gregory. Edwin, king of that country, while a pagan, had married Ethelburga, sister of the king of Kent; the lady, being a Christian, was attended by Paulinus. The wisdom and piety of this good man recommended his doctrine to all; and the idolators of Nor-

thumbria, induced by him to examine the foundation of the Christian religion, were won over to the true God. The chief of the heathen priests himself destroyed the temple of the idols ; for he said, " I, who worshipped them in folly, will give an example to others in destroying them, by the wisdom given me from the true God." The people set fire to the house, and idolatry fell in that kingdom. Edwin, the king, was baptised at York 627. York Minster now stands on the site of the little church where this rite was administered. Felix, a Burgundian, preached in East Anglia 631, and a very flourishing church soon appeared ; a school was also established, where boys were instructed in letters ; for the Saxons had no knowledge of letters till after the introduction of the Christian religion. Birinus, a missionary, preached in the kingdom of Wessex, and became bishop of Dorchester, in Oxfordshire, where a cathedral was founded.

Upon the death of Augustine, Laurentius became archbishop of Canterbury. Ethelbert, the good king of Kent, died also not long afterwards, and his place was but ill supplied by Edbald, his son, who, during the early part of his life and reign, did much mischief in the Church, both by his contempt for Christianity, and by his iniquitous life. The sons of Sebert, king of Essex,

were also heathens ; and those who loved the Church now trembled to see so many enemies rise around her. One day these sons of Sebert went into St. Paul's, where Mellitus was administering the Lord's supper ; and finding the sacramental bread was not offered to them, as it had been to their father, they inquired the cause, desiring to receive it. Mellitus, however, persisted in refusing, on the ground that they had never entered the Church by baptism. " If," said he, " you will be washed in the same laver of regeneration that your father was, you may partake of the same sacred bread ; but if you despise the laver of life, you cannot partake of the bread of life." We must admire the holy boldness of this bishop, and rejoice in a Church whose ministers, with unbending fidelity to their heavenly Master, have reprov'd even kings for His sake. The lawless princes expelled the good Mellitus, who, going into Kent, consulted Laurentius as to the measures it would be advisable to pursue during the present unfavourable state of affairs. The conference ended in their resolving to retire. Mellitus, and Justus bishop of Rochester, went into France ; and Laurentius intended to leave Kent, where, as before observed, Edbald had done so much to destroy Christianity. He employed the night before the day on which he was to

depart in prayer, entreating God to look upon the Church in this land, which had been so mercifully planted and watered, but which was now bending beneath the storm. In the morning Laurentius paid a visit to the king, who was so struck with remorse for his past iniquities, that he entreated the bishop not to depart; was baptised into the Christian Church, and continued to testify the sincerity of his conversion, by endeavouring to propagate religion; and it was (as we have noticed) by him that the queen of Edwin was supplied with the Christian bishop, who was the instrument, in the hands of Providence, for the conversion of Northumbria.

The whole country being at length converted, a perfect union of all the Churches was effected under Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury. He was a man of learning and piety; and, by his good example and constant labour, discipline and good order were established. The Saxon clergy were beloved by the people for the holiness of their lives, and the zeal with which they laboured for the gospel of Christ. Cathedrals, monasteries, and churches, were endowed by pious churchmen, who in this way devoted their wealth to the glory of the Giver; the clergy were supported by tithes, or tenths, as we have seen was the case in

the Jewish Church. In the reign of Ethelwolf the payment of tithes was enforced by law; and thus the clergy being freed from all anxiety as to temporal matters, were enabled to give themselves up to the service of God.

The cathedrals were churches in which bishops had seats; they were called mother churches, because baptism, the new birth unto righteousness, was administered in them. Parish churches were afterwards founded by persons possessing land, who, desirous of having the privileges of religion within reach of their families and servants, built churches on their estates.

We may here notice the birth of the false prophet Mahomet, which took place A.D. 569, at Mecca, in Arabia. His false religion has been received by millions. He taught that Christ was a prophet, but that he himself came to fulfil all things, and to establish pure religion. He propagated this creed principally by the sword, waging war on all who would not become his followers; and vast multitudes, won by the prospect of plunder, and the promise of paradise, embraced his religion, which still continues, like a destructive flood, to cover a large portion of the earth. The establishment of the Mahometan faith is dated from 622, when Mahomet became master of Medina.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VENERABLE BEDE AND HIS TIMES.

AMONG those who shone as lights before men in the early English Church, was Venerable Bede, born 671. He was a light both by his piety and by his learning, being equally eminent as a saint and as a scholar. It appears he was left, when still young, without father or mother, and was in his childhood placed by his relations in a monastery. There he was early trained to serve God with great circumspection and diligence, continuing to grow in religion, and to extend his usefulness as he increased in years. To pray, to write, and to read, he said, were his whole pleasures and employment. He was ordained a deacon at nineteen years of age, and afterwards became a priest. During his whole life he was employed in the happy object of spreading pure religion. He hated idleness; and used to say there was so much work for a divine to do, and so little time, that he ought not to lose any of it; and "that he was a sluggard who would reign with God,

and not labour for God ;” “ in the promised reward he takes delight, but is affrighted at the commanded combat.” He devoted himself very much to the study of the Scriptures, and concluded his reading with prayers. The number of works we still have written by Bede afford a sufficient proof of his wonderful industry ; it is to them we are indebted for our knowledge of the state of the Church in England in early days. His labours were never laid aside, though he was constantly suffering from sickness ; he continued to work even to his dying hour, finishing in his last illness a translation of St. John’s gospel. This great and good man was very humble both before God and man ; for though celebrated and sought after, he desired no elevation or distinction. He placed his confidence in his heavenly Father, as he testified by constantly calling on His name ; even in the night he was heard singing hymns and psalms of praise to God.

There were a great many monasteries in Bede’s time. The Saxons were much more ready in bestowing their wealth for good purposes than the English are now. Perhaps they were not so proud and luxurious then, and did not grasp at riches as a means of making themselves great in the eyes of an ill-judging world. Many monasteries and churches were built by them in early times,

and it is to them we owe some of the best possessions the Church still holds ; for while the hoarded stores of many a miser, gained even at the price of his own soul, have been scattered to the wind by the follies and vices of those into whose hands they have fallen, the good gifts of self-denying Christians have continued, through hundreds of years, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to supply a knowledge of the glorious gospel to thousands of immortal beings. The increase of monasteries at this time became dangerous ; and Bede used to say, there would be no man to defend the country against its enemies, for all were rushing into monasteries. We can easily account for this, when we consider that those were barbarous times, and it was difficult to lead a peaceful life except by entering some religious society. Persons of rank and wealth often retired to them ; among these was a nobleman, named Benedict Biscop, who determined to quit the noisy scenes society then presented, and to follow this manner of life. The king gave him a grant of land on the banks of the river Wear ; and he there built a monastery, called Wearmouth monastery. He took great pains to collect rich gifts and ornaments to adorn the church. The monastery of Jarrow or Yarrow, where Bede ended his days, was also built by him. The monks of that time

were very industrious, and were accustomed to employ some part of their time in useful labours: they worked in the gardens, attended to the cattle, threshed out the corn and ground it in mills. They were also occupied in teaching the young—this was often Bede's employment. The younger members copied the gospels, and books for the service of the church; and all spent their time in labour, fasting, and prayer. A missionary engaged in forming monasteries abroad, at a period a little earlier than that of which we are now speaking, gave this advice to his monks: "Think not it is enough to weary these bodies formed of dust of the earth with watching and fasting, unless we reform our manners. To make lean the flesh, if the soul bears no fruit, is like working the ground without being able to make it bear a crop; it is like making an image of gold on the outside and of clay within. True piety consists in humbleness of soul, not of body; for of what use is it to set servants to fight with the passions whilst those passions are good friends with the master? It is not enough to hear, talk, or read of virtue. Can a man cleanse his house of defilements by words only? Can he without pains and toil accomplish his daily task? Gird up your loins, therefore, and cease not to maintain a good fight; none but he who fights bravely can win the crown."

The monks did not confine their labours within the monasteries. Many preached abroad; and among the most celebrated of these at this time was St. Cuthbert, who spent days and weeks in preaching to the people who lived in the wild mountainous districts: he was raised to a bishopric, but died in great retirement.

A very pure spirit of piety existed at this period, as is evident from the regulations agreed to by a council then held at Clove's-hoe, now called Cliff's-hoe, near Rochester, A.D. 747. The clergy were directed to have fellowship one with another; to serve God with one spirit of faith, hope, and charity; to pray for one another; and to attend on the duties of the Sabbath.

King Ina of Wessex, who lived about this time, also enacted many laws to enforce that righteousness which exalteth a nation. There were great numbers of slaves in England in the times of the Saxons; they were principally persons taken in those wars which the kings of the different states used to wage one with another; and in those days of darkness and cruelty, parents sometimes sold their own children into slavery. But crooked things were becoming straight, and the desert began to rejoice and blossom as the rose, and the savage ferocity of man to be subdued by the religion of Jesus. More mercy was

shewn to those in bondage; and Ina endeavoured to put a stop to the wicked trade in slaves; for many merchants were engaged in those days in buying up and sending abroad the unfortunate prisoners brought to the market by the nobles, who had seized them in battle.

By another law, parents were desired to bring their children to baptism when they were thirty days old. From many incidents related in the history of those times, we may conclude that those who stood as god-fathers and godmothers were not so totally unmindful of their charge over the young Christian as we commonly see them now. Still, some errors and superstitions found their way among the Saxons; as there are at all times some of Satan's devices, against which the fathers in Christ must raise their voices, and the young and feeble must be wary. Bede saw much to call for reproof among the monks; and thought it would be good for the Church if some of the monasteries were turned into places in which bishops might be established, and the number of these increased. In some churches we find there had been placed shrines, or chests containing the bones or other relics of departed saints; and before these, persons ignorantly prayed. Acca, who had laboured with commendable zeal in building and in adorning

churches, fell into this error, and introduced many shrines, which led to evil consequences and much superstition.

English missionaries laboured with great zeal and perseverance, and became the honoured instruments by which the Lord added to His Church. Wilbrord, a priest, with twelve companions, went forth from England, and presented himself to Pepin, duke of the Franks. This prince afforded protection to the little company, was himself baptised, and enabled them to prosecute their labours for the conversion of others. Wilbrord thus became a willing exile from his country, that he might spread the gospel in foreign lands. His exertions, which continued for forty-six years, were crowned with success; he planted many churches and schools in the neighbourhood of Utrecht, in Holland, of which city he became bishop, and there ended his days, leaving behind him an honourable name.

The two Ewalds, with the same good purpose, ventured fearlessly among the pagans. To distinguish them, one was called the black Ewald, on account of his black hair; the other, the white Ewald, from his light hair. They travelled as missionaries into Saxony, preaching the gospel, singing their hymns, and performing the rites of the Christian religion. The pagans, however, seized these holy brothers; and before they could esta-

blish a church, they suffered a cruel martyrdom, A.D. 695.

Wynfrid, or Boniface, of Crediton in Devonshire, after labouring as a priest with great diligence in his own country, abandoned the distinction and prospects which his own character had opened to him at home, and, accompanied by some monks, went forth among idolaters, to declare the gospel of Christ; and he experienced many trials and dangers, depending sometimes upon the work of his own hands for subsistence. Several churches were established by him; and in the year 732 he became archbishop of Mayence. He was slain, with some others, his fellow-labourers, in a tumult of the pagans 755.

Great numbers of religious men were induced to follow his example, and left England to engage in the same good work; and multitudes were thus converted to the faith.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DANES.

ANOTHER enemy now arose against this country: a nation called the Danes, the inhabitants of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, made many attacks upon the coasts. Their first appearance against England was in 787: like a cloud of locusts, they spread destruction wherever they came, and religion received no mercy from these barbarous pagans. They have left behind them marks of their incursions; many circular mounds near the coast are known by the learned as the places of Danish camps. With these warlike savages the Saxons were quite unable to contend: they used to land in great numbers on the coast, make their attacks on the towns and villages, murdering and plundering wherever they went, and then retreat again to their ships, where they were perfectly safe, for the Saxons could not follow them for want of shipping. They at last met with a formidable opponent in King Alfred, who came to the throne A.D. 871. The Danes at that time were committ-

ing constant depredations; and the people, unable to make any successful attempts at resistance, submitted to be plundered. King Alfred, seeing they always had a sure retreat in their ships, began to build a fleet, and gained a victory over them by sea. They were also conquered in an engagement by land; but as they paid no regard to treaties, the country was constantly exposed to their ravages; and the wretched inhabitants of the island, imagining they were forsaken by Heaven, made no effort to oppose them, and entirely deserted their king. During this time, Alfred endured the greatest privations and hardships; and laying aside all appearance of royalty, he remained concealed for some time in the cottage of a herdsman. The good woman of the house, little dreaming that her modest-looking guest was the great king Alfred, set him one day to attend to her baking. The king having no experience in such matters, allowed her cakes to be burnt, which was a grievous offence in the eyes of the good woman, who scolding him, exclaimed, "You will eat cakes fast enough, but you will not take the trouble to attend to them."

Upon one occasion the king disguised himself as a harper, and, being a good musician, carried his instrument into the Danish camp, and while he was playing, he made

observations as to the state of the enemy. His perseverance and courage were at last crowned with success; and the Danes being finally defeated, were obliged to quit the country; those only who had received the gospel were permitted to remain.

This King Alfred was a pious Christian, as well as a good king: he devoted a third part of his time to the service of God, receiving daily the holy communion; half his revenue he expended in religious purposes, dividing it into four parts; one of which he spent on the monasteries he had founded; another on the schools; a third he distributed among the poor; and the remaining portion was bestowed on the Church of Christ, both at home and abroad. He was also very accomplished for his time; for in those days few kings could write: they often signed their documents with a cross, as the poor and ignorant do now. Charlemagne, the emperor of France, desired to learn to write, and appears to have been very persevering; for it is said he used to lay his writing-materials upon his pillow, that he might begin as soon as he awoke; however, he never attained to be a very good scribe.

About this time lived a very pious and learned English divine, named Alcuin, born 735. His fame for learning reached the ears of Charlemagne, and he was invited by him

to come and establish himself in France, where he became the counsellor and friend of the emperor, and the tutor of his children. He employed himself in making correct copies of the Scriptures, which were at that time very rare in France; and he presented to Charlemagne a Bible carefully corrected by himself. With this present he sent a letter, in which he said, he had long desired to offer some present, and "at last," he adds, "I have found out, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a present which it befits my character to offer, and which it will not be unworthy your wisdom to receive. Nothing can I offer more worthy of your great name than the book which I now send, the divine Scriptures, all bound up in one volume, and carefully corrected by mine own hand. It is the best gift which the devotion of my heart to your service, and my zeal for the increase of your glory, will enable me to find."

The period during which England was exposed to the incursions of the Danes was one of darkness and ignorance; for in such a time of suffering and danger men's minds were too much disturbed to allow them to advance in learning and civilisation. The monasteries, which had afforded libraries and schools, were abused, plundered, and destroyed. Many of these were restored in England by the celebrated Dunstan, born

925; but as this prelate appears to have been guided rather by ambition, and a love of power, than by a desire to restore true religion, we find his great exertions had not the effect of reforming the Church, but rather of encouraging the growth of superstition and hypocrisy.

In the reign of Ethelred the Danes were cruelly murdered throughout the country. This bloody deed did not go unpunished: Sweyn, king of Denmark, landed on the coast, and spread devastation through the land. The Danes besieged Canterbury; and Alphege, the archbishop, and Godwin, bishop of Rochester, with all the clergy and other persons of distinction, were carried away prisoners. A meeting of the Danish chiefs and the English counsellors was held in the following spring, 1012, to settle the ransom of these prisoners; for the Danes demanded a large sum before they would release them. The aged Alphege, feeling for the distress of his country, determined that no further loss or heavy expense should be incurred on his account. This enraged the greedy Danes, who knocked him down with the bones left from their feast, and murdered him with a battle-axe. The name of this archbishop, Alphege, is in the calendar of the Prayer-Book on the 19th of April, the day on which he suffered.

The whole country eventually submitted to the Danish monarch Sweyn. He was succeeded by Canute the Great, who was also king of Denmark, and afterwards of Norway. This king became a Christian, and enacted many good laws both for Church and state.

The Saxon line of kings was restored in Edward, surnamed the Confessor. He was the son of Ethelred, who had commanded the massacre of the Danes: he came to the throne in 1041, and reigned peacefully. The bishops of Rome at this time were very unlike the good Gregory, who sent Augustine into this country. The Church there had fallen into many errors, and some foreign bishops introduced into England by Edward the Confessor held some of the false doctrines which the Romish Church had added to the faith.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NORMANS.

UPON the death of Edward the Confessor, who was the last Saxon king, the crown was disputed. Harold, the son of Godwin (a nobleman who had risen to great power) laid claim to the kingdom. He was opposed by William, duke of Normandy, who raised a large army of foreigners, and landed at Hastings, in Sussex, where a battle took place, in which Harold was slain, and William (surnamed the Conqueror) was acknowledged king in 1066. The country was soon filled with these Norman conquerors: they were descendants of the Danes, a body of whom had possessed themselves of a large province in France, which they ruled under the title of Dukes of Normandy. No great change took place in religion, as was the case on former occasions when a new people ruled the land.

We have already seen the gradual departure from the doctrine and customs of the Apostles in the Church of Rome; and we

have now arrived at the period when the novelties and corruptions of Rome were beginning to find their way into the Church of England, and when she sunk for a time under the tyranny and usurpation of the pope. The words spoken by the prophet Isaiah of the Jewish Church during a temporary departure from God, may be applied to our own Church at this dark period: "The silver had become dross, her wine mixed with water" (Isaiah i. 22). But as we find the mercy of God still followed His people, the Israelites, when He promised to restore their judges as at the first, and their counsellors as at the beginning, "so that their city should be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isaiah i. 26), so it was also with our Church; God raised up faithful servants, who led it back into the good old ways pointed out by the Apostles, and followed, as we have seen, by the first converts to Christianity in this country. The two principal causes which led to the introduction of Romish corruptions were these; the tyranny and injustice of the Norman kings, and the introduction of foreign bishops: William the king, both from partiality for the Normans, and in order to prevent any attempts against his government from the Saxons, placed the former in all the important stations; and they became possessed of all the riches of the

country. The best estates were bestowed by William on his Norman barons; the same course was pursued by him in ecclesiastical matters: all the bishoprics and church-property were given to foreigners: Stigand, the English archbishop of Canterbury, was removed from his see, and replaced by an Italian named Lanfranc. Now this Lanfranc had been connected with the Church of Rome, and he was therefore much more inclined to countenance her errors than our own churchmen were. He was, however, a man of much piety, and did much to reform abuses. During his time, a liturgy, or public service, was compiled by Osmund, bishop of Salisbury, so that all the churches in England were thus enabled to make use of the same form. Yet Lanfranc did wrong in lending himself to the unjust measure of depriving the Saxon clergy of their benefices. They were, in many instances, men whose holy lives defied the malice of their enemies; and as these could not afford an excuse, the most trivial objections were made reasons for depriving them of their authority and charges. This was particularly the case with Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester; he was a Saxon, a man of great piety and sincerity. In pursuance of the system of displacing all the Saxons, Lanfranc held a meeting in Westminster Abbey, where the good bishop was

called upon to deliver up his crosier. A crosier was borne by a bishop as a sign of his office : the crosier was at first a sort of staff in the form of a capital T, but afterwards they were formed something like a shepherd's crook. Wulfstan behaved with great humility and becoming dignity; he consented to resign his staff, and to give up his bishopric, but he said he would resign it to him from whom he had received it; this was from Edward the Confessor, and he laid his crosier on the tomb of that king. Those present were so struck with his calm and dignified manner, that they prevailed with the king to allow him to retain his office. Wulfstan laboured with fidelity in the Church, and his good works have left a monument by which he will be remembered. At that time, the cruel unchristian practice of selling slaves still existed in this country, and this Wulfstan laboured to stop. There were men at Bristol who carried on this trade; they kept the poor wretches in secret, and sent them, both men and women, over to Ireland. This custom was deplored by Wulfstan, who visited Bristol several times, and endeavoured to teach the people how inconsistent it was with the precepts of love and humanity taught by the Redeemer; and so convinced them, that the populace, hearing of a person who was

still attempting to continue the trade, they seized and severely handled him.

Gregory VII. was pope of Rome about this time: he was a man of great ambition, and may be called the founder of popery; for though errors had been gradually and imperceptibly growing up in that once pure Church for a long period, yet no pope ever exercised so much power as Gregory endeavoured to obtain. You have often heard of the errors of popery; but as perhaps you may not know on what important points they of the Church of Rome differ from us, I will here give a slight sketch of them.

The doctrine of transubstantiation is a matter in which that Church has departed from the apostolic faith. The Church of Rome teaches that the nature and substance of the bread and wine received in the sacrament are changed, and become flesh and blood: contrary to the saying of Christ, who, after the consecration and administration of the cup, called it still the fruit of the vine, saying, "I will not drink any more of the fruit of the vine" (Luke xxii. 18); and also contrary to the doctrine of the primitive Church, which has been, that the elements do not cast off their nature, but "that Christ is really and truly present in the sacraments; in baptism, that we may put Him on; in His supper,

that we may by faith and spirit eat Him, and from His blood and cross may have everlasting life;" "for though we have not Christ actually between our teeth" (as the Romanists taught), "yet we have Him and eat Him by faith, by understanding, and spirit." The Romanists also believe in a place called purgatory, where the souls of men are tormented by fire, and from whence, they think, the prayers of the living may deliver them; that saints hear our prayers, and know our wants; and that the good works they have wrought, being more than sufficient for themselves, become the riches of the Church, and the pope disposes of them to supply the wants of others, and to release them from purgatory; that all of the Catholic Church, even those whose lives have been sinful, will be eventually saved after enduring torment; that the pope is infallible, being a ruler over kings, and disposing of crowns and dominions; in fact, that he is the one head of the Catholic Church, and that none in Christendom has authority to restrain him. They also offer prayers to the Virgin Mary, and to other saints. This is a brief outline of the edifice of errors which men had now erected, and many of these errors had at this time crept into the English Church.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RIGHT OF INVESTITURE.

THE point for which the pope now vigorously contended was the right of investiture. It was the custom in early times, when contracts were not made in writing, as at present, to settle an agreement by some simple ceremony; for instance, when a man had purchased land of another, the person of whom the land was bought, by way of certifying the agreement, would give to him who purchased, a piece of turf, signifying thereby that he made over the property to him; if trees were on the land, they were made over by the delivery of a bough. The same plan was pursued in ecclesiastical matters; when a priest was appointed bishop, his appointment was shewn by his receiving a crosier and a ring. In the times of the Saxons, the bishops and clergy combined with the king in electing a bishop. After the Norman conquest, when William became king of England, the king conferred mitres and made bishops as he would; and when

William Rufus, who succeeded to the throne in 1087, assumed this power, great confusion and evil arose from it. He was an impious prince, having no fear of God, nor love for His Church; and whenever any bishopric became vacant, he seized upon the funds, and, that he might be able to carry on this robbery, appointed no bishop. Upon one occasion, he left the archbishopric of Canterbury vacant four years, in order to seize the property of the Church, and apply it to his own purposes. Sickness, however, which often terrifies the ungodly, by opening to their view a coming judgment, had its effect upon this king; and, in his alarm, he appointed Anselm archbishop. He was well fitted for the office, being a devout man who feared God; but, like most of this perilous time, he had too great a respect for Rome; and, seeing how grievously the Church had suffered from the system of keeping open the vacancies, as had been done by the Norman kings, Anselm, by way of a remedy, procured that the right of investiture should be given to the pope. This, of course, greatly increased the power of the pope in this country; and it received a further addition in the time of William of Corboil, who succeeded Anselm. He was unpopular in his appointment; therefore, in order to confirm himself in his seat, he procured a bull from the pope, by which he

was made legate. A legate is the chosen ambassador of the pope, or the bishop selected by him to act for him in a foreign country. This power was confirmed by a bull, which is like an edict of a king; it is a parchment, with a leaden seal, representing on one side the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, and on the other it has the name of the pope. *Bulla* means seal, and hence its name.

In the times of these early Norman kings, the holy wars, or crusades, were carried on; but we shall see the object for which they were undertaken in another chapter.

In the reign of Henry II. the influence of the Romish Church was further increased. Henry, actuated more by the love of power than by the desire of doing any real good, wished to curb the power of the clergy. He appointed Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, fancying, from his knowledge of the character of Becket, that he would second his plans. In this, however, he was totally disappointed: Becket united with the pope, and carried on a constant struggle against the king. Henry was of an irritable and passionate temper; and, hearing upon one occasion of a triumph Thomas à Becket had gained, exclaimed, that "he surely had no sincere friend in his kingdom; for, if he had, this ungrateful hypocrite (for so he called Becket) would not be

suffered to insult him." These words were repeated, as kings' words often are; and four men, attendants at court, being influenced probably by a personal dislike to Becket, bound themselves by a vow to revenge the king's injuries. They left the country (for this occurred in France), and arrived at Becket's house: here an angry conversation took place; and while the archbishop was ascending the steps of the altar, these men fell upon and barbarously murdered him. In looking into the history of this archbishop, we cannot but deplore that so much fortitude, self-denial, and strength of intellect, were so misapplied. He was led astray by the errors of the Romish Church, and died in a cause he had conscientiously supported; doubtless thinking, like St. Paul before his conversion, that he did God service in oppressing the Church. By the circumstances which took place upon the death of Thomas à Becket, we may discover into what a lamentable state of ignorance and superstition the Church of England had fallen. As soon as the people were made acquainted with his death, they rushed into the church, eager to dip their hands in his blood. He was revered as a saint and martyr; for it was the policy of the Romish party to encourage this feeling. A magnificent tomb was erected to his memory in Canterbury Cathedral, where many mira-

cles were said to be performed; it was even reported that dead men had there been restored to life. Miraculous cures were supposed to be wrought on beasts: cows, dogs, and horses, were healed of their diseases at the tomb of the archbishop. It was said that he arose from his coffin, and lighted the wax tapers. The marble steps leading to his tomb are worn by the multitudes who ignorantly and superstitiously visited it; 100,000 persons are said to have presented themselves there in one year; and 600*l.*, an immense sum in those days, was offered at his altar; while the altar of Christ, in the same church, was deserted. Thus was a creature set up in the place of the Creator, and the temple of Jesus was polluted with gross idolatry. Henry, the king of England, thought proper to appease the Church of Rome by performing a severe penance at Becket's tomb. Clothed in sackcloth, he submitted to walk barefoot over the flinty road to the church; there, prostrating himself before Becket's shrine, he endured scourging until the blood flowed from his bared shoulders.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE USURPATION OF THE POPE.

IN the reign of King John, another struggle occurred respecting the investiture of the bishops. Upon this occasion, the pope laid the kingdom under an interdict. By this, almost all means of grace were denied the people: the priests were forbidden to exercise their functions; the dead remained unburied, or were deposited in unconsecrated ground. We may conceive what a terrible state of things this must have been, and to what an awful extent this haughty pretender, the pope, must have carried his ungodly pride, when he dared, by his mandate, to deny to the people of God the use of those means of grace with which His mercy had blessed them. This continued for six years; when King John submitted in the most abject manner to the pope, consenting to receive his kingdom and crown as a gift from his hands. The pope's legate, Pandolf, in order to make him feel his dependence, retained possession of the king's crown for

some days, and then presented it in the name of the pope. The kingdom was now bound by John to pay an annual sum of 1000 marks to the pope; just as conquered countries pay a tribute to their conquerors. During this period, innumerable evils spread in the Church: the clergy were divided into two bodies; the seculars, who lived much as the clergy do now, and the monks, who resided in the monasteries before described. In the confusion occasioned by the contention between the king and the pope, these monasteries obtained exemption from episcopal jurisdiction; that is, they were freed from the authority and superintendence of the bishop. This was a great abuse, as all members of Christ's Church ought to submit to those who are placed over them, and who watch for their souls. The monks departed very much from the severity and purity of life which had formerly gained them respect and affection; and, at this time, four orders of mendicants, or begging friars, established themselves in the country. These were, the Franciscans, or friars minor; the Dominicans, or black friars; the Carmelites, or white friars; and the Augustins, or grey friars. These friars lived on charity, depending on the alms of the people. At first they gained great credit by the simplicity and self-denial of their lives; but they soon de-

parted from their original rules, and proved great supporters of popery, roving about the country. They used to preach out of doors, wherever they could collect a body of listeners; and, like the dissenters of the present time, instead of helping to lead the people into the one fold of the one Shepherd, they would attack the resident parish-priest, and endeavour to make him an object of contempt; thus making it a part of their piety to teach the people to despise and disregard those whom God had appointed as His ministers. The houses of God also became marks against which they used their weapons. The cathedrals, we have seen, were generally built and endowed by the piety of the Saxon kings; and every household was accustomed to testify its love for these mother churches by the payment of a certain composition, called *Pentecostals*, because paid at Pentecost, and by benefactions and gifts, or money left at death. Thus these goodly dwelling-places of religion were kept in becoming order, until the friars, by filling the minds of the people with evil feeling, discouraged and broke through their good old customs; and the offerings which, in the days of lowly reverence for God and His Church, poured abundantly forth, were discontinued, and it became a hard matter to keep the walls of His temples in decent

repair. Those holy Scriptures, which would have taught a more perfect way, were not within the reach of the people; and the prayers of the Church, that fountain from which all who thirst after holiness must seek the draught of strength and refreshment to the soul, poured not forth its healing streams as now; for, by the superstition of the age, it was deemed expedient to use a language which the people could not understand, and the services were performed in Latin. Images were also used in an idolatrous manner, and an honour and worship bestowed upon saints, which belongs to God alone. The relics of the saints,—such as the skull, the tooth, or any bone,—were greatly and superstitiously honoured; miracles were supposed to be wrought by their touch. This veneration for relics led to many evils; those churches were most esteemed, and most frequented by pilgrims, where the largest collection of these remains could be found. The consequence was, the monks were by no means scrupulous how they were obtained; sometimes they were stolen, or falsehoods were invented to deceive the people about them.

In the monasteries, the strictness of ancient discipline and order had greatly declined; and the monks, having become greedy of gain, levelled a heavy blow at the Church, by possessing themselves of the benefices.

They became masters of the great tithes of many parishes; and the funds, which ought to have been used in supplying ministers to labour in that vineyard in which weeds will ever spring up, were perverted and exhausted by the monasteries and abbeys. They satisfied themselves with merely appointing one to fulfil the duties of the Church, and to the priest so appointed the title of vicar was given. This is the origin of vicarages: they are parishes in which the great tithes have been separated from the Church to which they rightly belong; and thus we find many large parishes where there are only sufficient funds to support one church and one clergyman, and the people, like sheep having no shepherd, are left to wander in the wilderness of ignorance, and to fall into the hands of the first schismatic, who, "by good words and fair speeches, deceives the hearts of the simple."

CHAPTER XXIII.

REFORMERS.

THROUGH the dark night of superstition many bright stars shed forth their pure light, and many faithful servants were sent, like the prophets in Israel, to call upon the chosen but wandering people, to "hear the word of the Lord." Richard, bishop of Chichester 1245, was one of those whose holy lives called those around to repentance. Henry III. had withheld the revenues belonging to his bishopric, and the good bishop was during this time supported by the charity of his people. When his property was restored to him, though he found it in an impoverished state, he immediately distributed liberal gifts to the poor; and when one represented to him that he could not afford such liberality, he answered, "Is it right that we should feed off gold and silver, while Jesus Christ suffers hunger in the person of his poor? I know how to content myself with earthen vessels, as my father did. Let every thing be sold, even to my horse, if there be

need." He spent his life in diligently attending to the duties of his office, and death found him still engaged in the work of the Lord.

Robert Grosteste, bishop of Lincoln, was another who, by his indefatigable labours, did much to restrain and guide those committed to his charge. He also opposed, with great firmness, the pretensions and tyranny of the pope, who, knowing what a powerful enemy he had in this zealous and upright bishop, rejoiced greatly to hear of his death, declaring that every true son of the Roman Church ought to rejoice when "so great an enemy was removed." But the most determined opponent the pope had yet encountered in England was John Wickliffe. He flourished in the reign of Edward III.; he preached against the friars and the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation; he declared further, that the Church of Rome was not the head of the other churches; thus insisting upon the independence of the Church in England. He translated the holy Scriptures into English, and thus unlocked to the people a door by which they might enter the temple of truth. The king had married Anne of Luxembourg, and this marriage led to the propagation of Wickliffe's opinions; for the queen greatly favoured the

inquiry after truth, so much encouraged by the efforts of this reformer, and she sent many books which he had written against popery into Germany, where they spread far and wide. As, however, we are ever liable to run into extremes, Wickliffe, while he attacked Romanism, put forth many sentiments favourable to sedition and dissent, thus leaving the middle course of the apostolic Church still to be discovered by those who were afterwards endowed with a more perfect knowledge. He died 1384. His disciples became numerous, and were called Lollards, from their practice of singing hymns; in the old German dialect, *lollen*, or *lullen*, signifying to sing.

The early reformers endured much persecution. William Sawtre, a clergyman, who taught the doctrines of Wickliffe, was burnt to death in the reign of Henry IV. John Badley, a poor workman, also suffered death with great fortitude, for he also had forsaken the errors of popery. John Oldcastle, baron Cobham, was another who drew down the vengeance of the Romanists by his steadfast adherence to the reformed religion; this nobleman was a favourite of Henry V., who, however, delivered him to his enemies, and he was burnt to death 1417.

We have seen the bright moon, gliding on

her heavenly way, pass through the dark clouds of night, and so have we been for a time deprived of her glory; but we look, and she again comes forth, as pure and as fair as ever. Thus it was at the Reformation. The Church of England had passed away from her first purity, her glory had been dimmed by the errors of Rome; but our heavenly Father, who willeth not that any should perish, thus raised up a cloud of witnesses, through whom He called upon the Church in England to remember from whence she had fallen, and "to repent and do the first works," as He had called the Asiatic churches by the apostle St. John (Rev. ii. 5). For "even as oftentimes buildings are so thrown down, that the foundation and some ruins do remain, so God suffered not His Church to be subverted and overthrown by antichrist from the very foundation, or to be laid even with the ground; but, however, to punish the ingratitude of men, He suffered it to be horribly shaken, torn, and rent, yet His pleasure was, that the building should remain, after all this waste and decay, though half thrown down;" and in this was the great goodness of God, that "He reserved to Himself a Church, even in the midst of all desolation, and that He called them by His word, and confirmed them by His sacraments, even as at this day;" and when superstition threat-

ened our Zion, then was it that the Lord stretched forth His arm to help His inheritance, and to free her from the enemies that encompassed her round about. The great excesses into which the Romanists had fallen aroused many from their slumber, and induced them to examine the foundation from which they had risen, and to question the authority of the pope. Thus a large body of the intelligent and faithful were ready to enlist themselves in defence of their first faith. John Huss, a Bohemian, and Jerome of Prague, continued to spread the same opinions as those held by Wickliffe; and the general sense of the Church is shewn by the declarations of many councils, in which the assembled heads of the Church called for a reformation of growing abuses. It is greatly to be regretted that the work was not begun by them. Individuals, unaided and alone, endeavoured to act as guides, and to lead back to the old way; and some wandered from their course, and led others astray with them.

The Church of Rome was much weakened by divisions,—three popes had contended together, each claiming the honour of being infallible head of the Church, and each excommunicating the other.

In the year 1513, Leo X. became pope. He had been ordained at the early age of seven, through the interest of his father. The

ordination of a child of that age, to minister before God in the holy mysteries of religion, was one of those scandalous abuses by which Rome shewed herself a corrupt Church. The pope Leo, though distinguished for a love of the arts and sciences, had no love for that wisdom which is from above; he did all in his power to extinguish the light which was now beginning to burn, and to put a stop to every effort to bring about a reformation. Men's consciences—which testified to them that those things which they were required to believe were not of God—were not to be so easily stifled. An individual arose to shake the tottering fabric of falsehood, and to point to the rock from whence the Church was hewn. It happened that this pope, Leo X., had become very poor; his love for the arts led him into many expenses, and he had exhausted his treasures. At this time, too, he was engaged in a work which required money. Julius, who was pope before him, had begun St. Peter's Church, a large and very splendid building; and Leo, in order to carry on the work, endeavoured to raise money by the sale of indulgences.

In order to explain this, it must be observed that it was the custom of the early Church to enjoin penance to those who had been guilty of sin. Thus they testified their sorrow by

submitting to such punishments as the Church laid upon them. These penances lasted for a longer or shorter period, according to the nature of the sin. Some performed penance for five years, and some for a longer period.

In after-times, when the Romish corruptions began to increase, persons were granted indulgences; that is, the Romish Church let them off their penances, on condition that they engaged in some work appointed by the pope. Penitents were for some time employed by the pope in fighting in the holy wars, or crusades. Jerusalem, the scene of Christ's sufferings, is a spot upon which men have, ever since His appearing, looked with peculiar interest. Christians, in early times, often undertook pilgrimages to this famous city; and on their return, they brought sad tales of all they had seen of the sufferings of the Christians, and how they were oppressed by the Turks and Infidels. An extraordinary person, called Peter the hermit, was one who in those times visited Jerusalem; and being deeply grieved at the sorrows of the Church there, he induced the pope to invite Christian kings to raise an army to free Jerusalem from the power and cruelty of the Infidels; thus a war was commenced, which was called "the holy war," or the crusades, and all who engaged in these wars were called crusaders. Pope Urban II., at a council held

at Clermont in France, A.D. 1095, promised to grant indulgence, or to free all penitents from the penance they were required to perform for their sins, on condition that they would engage in this war. Immense numbers gladly enlisted. Kings and princes joined the army, and multitudes from England obtained indulgence in this manner. These wars were not always in Palestine; and the pope was thus enabled to call large armies to his service. The Church of Rome taught, that those who thus devoted themselves to the service of the pope, performed a good work, and obtained forgiveness of past sin. This doctrine of indulgence was, however, added to in length of time, like many others; false and unscriptural as it was in the beginning, it afterwards became much worse. The pope Leo, in order to procure money, offered indulgences for sale; these were letters, by which sins were pardoned, and souls delivered from purgatory. Persons were required to pay according to their stations, and the nature of their crimes; princes and kings paid large sums: certain sins had certain sums put on them; for instance, those who had committed sacrilege or perjury, paid nine ducats; those who had been guilty of murder paid eight, and so on. The dealers in these abominations travelled through the countries in carriages. They

were met by the inhabitants of the towns, which they entered amidst music and singing, one of the popish party bearing a red cross. When all things were prepared, a sermon, or address, was begun, and all were invited to come and buy the letters of the pope, by which all sins, present, past, and future, were pardoned. The money paid by the deluded people was deposited in a chest, and was to be given to the pope, as it was said, to carry on the building of St. Peter's Church at Rome. While the populace were imposed on by this deceitful invention, the hearts of many burnt within them at the abomination; they perceived that the Romish indulgences were but "nets to fish for money, and to entangle the simple;" for they knew that "remission of sins, and eternal life, are not to be purchased for money."

Martin Luther was one whose upright mind could no longer brook the propagation of these bold falsehoods. This celebrated German reformer was born at Eisleben, in Lower Saxony, 1483. He applied himself at first to the study of the law. A singular occurrence, however, induced him to change his course in life: he was going one day from his father's house to his academy, when he was overtaken by a violent storm; the thunder was tremendous, and a thunderbolt struck so close to Luther that

he fell to the ground. He was so impressed by the circumstance, and the danger he had escaped, that he determined to devote himself to the service of God, and he became a monk; and though a papist, yet the love of truth so possessed him, that he could not lend himself to those popish inventions and falsehoods which he saw growing around him. He warned the people against trusting in the pope's letters of indulgence, bidding them "have a care how they gave ear to indulgences," telling them to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," and "not to buy indulgences which were offered for paltry pence."

The pope excommunicated Luther; and the tie which bound him to the Romish Church being thus broken, he freely examined its faith; and discovering many abuses, he raised his voice against them.

A change, as we have seen, had been working in England. Printing having been recently invented, the thoughts of Luther, and of other reformers, spread rapidly through Christendom. Copies of the New Testament in English were now within the reach of the people. There was a time when they were not to be had for money; and a bishop of Winchester, borrowing one from a convent in that city, was obliged to give a solemn

bond that it should be returned, before he was allowed to use it.

The Romanists endeavoured to stop the circulation of the Scriptures, but their efforts were vain; religious truth spread "like the morning upon the mountains," and no man could stay its course.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CRANMER AND HIS TIMES.

THOMAS CRANMER has been called one of the fathers of the Reformation of the Church in England, for under him that work was chiefly conducted. He was remarkable for his accomplishments and learning, and had given great attention to the study of the Scriptures. He was born 1489.

Henry VIII. was king of England at the time when Luther was rousing Germany. Humanly speaking, it did not appear likely that the Church of Christ should be prosperous in this nation during his reign. He was a Romanist when he ascended the throne. He had opposed the reformers, and entered into disputes with Luther. The Ruler of princes brought good out of evil, and made all things to work together for the deliverance of His Church. King Henry VIII. had married his brother's widow; and upon this marriage, which was not generally considered lawful, he himself entertained some scruples. In this difficulty, he applied to the pope for

a divorce. The pope, however, hesitated in his decision. The queen Catharine, from whom the king desired to be divorced, was aunt to Charles V., emperor of Germany; and the pope was afraid, that by granting Henry's request he should offend this powerful prince; at the same time, he was unwilling to make an enemy of Henry of England; he therefore delayed the business so long that the king became impatient. At this time, he happened to become acquainted with Cranmer; the meeting appeared quite accidental; it happened in this way: King Henry being on a journey, passed the night at Waltham Cross, and two of his servants went to sleep at the house of a Mr. Cressy; here they found Cranmer, who had been driven from Cambridge by a contagious disease; these talked together on the one great topic of the day,—namely, the king's divorce; and Cranmer declared his opinion, that the marriage could be set aside without the consent of the pope. These words were repeated to the king, who was anxious to have the affair concluded, and thus Cranmer was introduced to him; and becoming afterwards a great favourite, he was enabled, from his exalted station, to accomplish many good works in the Church. By his advice, the king applied to all the universities in Europe on the lawfulness of his marriage, instead of waiting to be guided

by the pope alone; and as the decision was in favour of the divorce, and against the authority of the pope, the marriage was set aside, and the king shortly after married Anne Boleyn. Thus the Church of Rome was set at nought; and the pope threatening to excommunicate the king, all further communication was broken off.

The bishops and clergy assembled in synod 1534, and decided that the bishop of Rome had no power in England, and all the ecclesiastical body agreed to the decision. The king was acknowledged the head of the Church in England. He, however, rather retarded the work of reformation than otherwise, continuing to support many Romish errors. But the decisive step had been taken, and the Church of England had burst from her chains; the word of God was circulated, and eagerly sought for by the people. The Romanists still made attempts to stop its course; and one person was fined no less than 18,840*l.*, upon its being discovered that he had supplied Bibles to the people.

Commissions were now appointed to examine into the state of the monasteries. These establishments, as before observed, had become exceedingly corrupt; yet it is evident that the examinations were not always conducted with impartiality.

The Romish corruptions and abuses were

great; and being laid open to the view, a strong feeling against all such establishments was created. This the king gladly encouraged, not from any desire to benefit the Church, by restoring its ancient institutions to their primitive purity, but to justify the spoliation he practised.

By his extravagant expenditure he had exhausted his treasury; and he was glad to supply his wants by seizing the property of the Church. Cranmer and other good men lent him help, in hope of seeing the funds better applied, and under a promise that all things should be done for the glory of God. The lesser monasteries were the first that fell; they were the houses of those friars before mentioned, who did much mischief, and supported the papal power. The suppression was an occasion of rejoicing among those who were looking for a reformation. In the year 1536, three hundred and seventy-six small abbeys were put down, and 10,000 persons were thus thrown upon the world in a friendless and destitute condition. After a short interval, the large monasteries also fell a prey to the king. The frauds of the Romanists were again made manifest, and by them the spoilers stood excused in the eyes of those who would have otherwise trembled at the sacrilege. Many tricks and lying miracles were discovered; among them the crucifix

at Boxley, called the "rood of grace," is notorious; the figure on the cross moved its head and feet and rolled its eyes, and the superstitious were greatly worked upon by the crafty priests through this extraordinary appearance. It was found that the thing had been managed by machinery; and the imposture was exposed at St. Paul's cross, where the citizens were invited to examine the contrivance. The king proposed applying the property taken from the monasteries to the endowment of eighteen bishoprics; six only were endowed; the property of the Church was sadly wasted, and much was bestowed by the king on his favourites. Churches and religious houses, which might have been cleared from Roman superstitions, and made the dwelling-places of the Most High, were fearlessly profaned, pulled down, or robbed; the plate was swept from the altars, and the holy furniture converted to common uses, or made to minister to the pride and luxury of these bold spoilers. A severe shock was felt through the country at these great changes; and the government, in order to ensure the support of the powerful, granted abbey-lands to the laity as gifts, or at an easy purchase. Persons obtaining property in this way were called lay-impropriators; they are such as hold the great tithes originally belonging to the Church. Valuable collections of books

were destroyed. Covetousness seems to have reigned predominant in the hearts of those employed in these changes, and all that proved no convenient food for its greediness was little regarded; if, indeed, any book happened to have a rich cover, that was torn off and preserved, while the book itself was turned to waste paper. Cranmer and Latimer, a bold and zealous reformer, in vain raised their voices against these iniquitous proceedings; the heart of the king was not under the influence of true religion; and many there were who, for the love of money, urged him on to other measures. Thus was the Church doomed to mourn under fresh sorrows; no sooner was she set free from the tyranny of Rome than she was vexed by those of her own household; and many who had risen to set her free, now turned to spoil her goods.

The Church of God, like the spirit of each child of God, is ordained to be purified here below in the fire of affliction, to pass through varied trials and much tribulation. Yet, whether in the day when the feeble hands hang down for sorrow, or when prosperity assembles a hurtful band around, there is deliverance, for "the Lord is the Shepherd."

Before the Reformation, the poor were supported by the Church; but after the changes which have been described, the poorer classes

were left very destitute, being deprived of this voluntary assistance. In Queen Elizabeth's reign it was found necessary to secure a provision for them by law; these laws were called poor-laws.

To enforce certain Romish errors held by the king, six articles were drawn up, and all who would not receive them were to suffer as heretics. These articles were therefore called the six bloody articles. Cranmer boldly argued against them, but they were nevertheless agreed upon. Many suffered death in this reign on account of their opinions; the king, still half a papist, contended against both Romanist and Reformer; against Reformers because they rejected many opinions held by the Church of Rome; and against the Romanists because they held that the pope, and not the king, was the supreme head of the Church.

Among the former, Dr. Barnes was burnt to death in 1540. He had been sent to Germany to confer with the divines on the lawfulness of Henry's divorce, and there embraced the reformed doctrines; and on his return, he was, for propagating his new opinions, condemned as a heretic. The circulation of the Bible now received a cheek; for it was said, that as many persons had perverted the sense of the Scriptures, none but gentlemen and gentlewomen should read

them. The works of the reformers were also burnt at St. Paul's cross. King Henry, by whom, as we have seen, the work of reformation was both begun and hindered, died in 1547.

CHAPTER XXV.

CRANMER AND HIS TIMES (CONTINUED).

EDWARD the Sixth, a young prince who honoured and feared God in all his ways, succeeded to the throne on the death of Henry; and Cranmer, who became one of his chief advisers, was enabled in his time to proceed more freely with the work of abolishing the novel superstitions brought in by the Romish power. The persecution under the six bloody articles of Henry VIII. was now stopped; the Scriptures were freely circulated; and that no one should be without knowledge, a Bible was conveniently placed in every church, that all might have an opportunity of reading it. A volume of homilies, or sermons, was also composed by the most eminent and learned divines of the day. Cranmer and Latimer assisted in composing them. The object was by them to set forth the pure religion and sound faith of Christ's Church in England, and to guard its members, by wholesome instructions, against heresies and schisms. A second volume of

these homilies appeared in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

A liturgy, or public service of prayer, was drawn up in this reign. A select committee of bishops and other divines, consisting in all of thirteen of the most eminent and pious men in the Church, was appointed for this purpose by Edward the Sixth.

These were desired to prepare a book comprehending an order for morning and evening prayer; a form for administering the sacraments, and for celebrating all other offices. It was thought that "the public worship of God was too important and sacred a thing to be trusted with, or left to the sudden and extempore heats of every private pastor;" and that "since the nature of our public prayers and praises is always the same, a prescribed form would be a great help to a steady and regular devotion."¹ Nor was a prescribed form an invention either of Romanist or Reformer. We find, by the writings of the early Christians, that in the earliest and purest times, forms of prayer were used in public service. They state, that in the assemblies on Sunday, the Scriptures were read, and a sermon was preached, a form of prayer offered, and the Lord's supper celebrated. "In the congregations of Christians," says one of these early writers,² "there was one

¹ Sparrow.

² Clemens Alexandrinus.

mind and one voice in common." The bishops and divines, therefore, who compiled the service of our Church, endeavoured to reduce every thing to the primitive standard of the first and purest ages of Christianity. They collected all the service-books then in use; for the Church had liturgies before, only those in the time of popery were said in Latin, and the people were thus prevented joining with the spirit and the understanding, for they understood not what was said. The bishops then compared the service-books with the ancient liturgies; and many parts of our Church-service are taken word for word from an ancient collection of prayers used in the primitive times; for instance, when we pray for bishops, priests, and deacons, and all committed to their charge, for the sick, for travellers by land and by water, for our enemies, for widows and young children, and for prisoners and captives, we pray in the words found in the most ancient liturgies; we offer an incense of prayer that has been streaming from the altars of earth's redeemed through past ages. The exhortation, absolution, and confession, were taken by the compilers of the Prayer-book from the services of foreign divines.

The Church Catechism, which is found so useful as containing a sound and simple explanation of the faith and duty of every mem-

ber of the Church, was published in 1553 by the king's authority. It was written, after much consideration, by pious and learned men, and examined carefully by bishops and competent persons appointed to that work; it ended at first where we find the Lord's prayer. The part explaining the sacraments was afterwards added. The faith of the Church was also further defended by Thirty-nine Articles, drawn up and received by the convocation of English bishops and divines in 1562: they are as a wall of defence to the Church, both against the Romanists and the sectaries. These were approved of by the convocation in 1571; they insure unity in the clergy, since none can receive ordination and enter the ministry who do not assent to them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MARTYRS OF QUEEN MARY'S TIME.

A CLOUD hung over the Church upon the death of Edward in 1553; the princess Mary became heiress to the crown. Cranmer, full of apprehension for the safety of the Church, desired to see the Lady Jane Grey at the head of the government; but Mary's right was not to be set aside, and the Church endured another day of trial. Queen Mary was a bigoted papist, and determined to restore the Roman Catholic religion. Gardiner and Bonner, both of whom are deservedly detested for their fiend-like cruelty, assisted the queen in effecting this change. Yet the Lord strengthened the hearts of His children; and though tried by severe chastening, they were faithful unto the end. Bishops, priests, and laymen, suffered with constancy. Many foreigners, who, to avoid persecution, had fled from their own countries to England, were expelled; fourteen bishops were compelled to vacate their sees, and three thousand clergymen were driven from their

churches. The pope again usurped an authority in opposition to the English Church, which had declared in a solemn convocation, that the bishop of Rome had no power in this kingdom.

Numbers of persons of all ages were burnt to death. John Rogers, prebendary of St. Paul's, having embraced the reformed doctrines, and warned his flock to beware of popery, and to continue in these perilous times steadfast to the faith, was burnt to death. A pardon was offered him at the stake, if he would recant; but he refused, and endured with much patience, so that others beholding, blessed God and took courage.

Hooper, bishop of Gloucester, was one of those who suffered during this persecution. Hearing that Gloucester was to be the scene of his death, he rejoiced that he should thus confirm before his flock the doctrines he had taught them. The people came together to witness his martyrdom, and he lamented that he was forbidden to address them. "When I was their pastor," said he, "I preached unto them true and sincere doctrine, and that out of the word of God; because I will not now account the same to be heresy and untruth, this unkind death is now prepared for me." A pardon was offered to tempt him to deny; but the Spirit of the Holy One was

triumphant, and the martyr passed away in peace.

Nicholas Ridley, bishop of London, was another of that noble army of martyrs who fought and died in defence of the faith of our Church; one whose great piety, gentleness of spirit, talent, and learning, made him a peculiar ornament to the age in which he lived, and have cast a bright halo round his memory. As a bishop, he laboured with great diligence among the people committed to his charge, and was made an instrument, by divine Providence, to bring Cranmer and Latimer to a sound faith, leading them away by his arguments from some of the errors and superstitions of popery. He was much given to prayer and contemplation; his day being divided between private prayers, family devotion (in which he gave a lecture on the New Testament, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles), the despatch of business, study in his private chamber, and useful discourse. This good bishop was appointed one day to preach before King Edward. The sermon he preached was on the duty of giving alms; and he said, that those who held high stations ought particularly to excel in this grace, as they possessed the means of doing much good, and their example had an influence over others. The pious young king lis-

tened attentively as the bishop reasoned of these things, and afterwards sent for him; as they sat together, the king said, "I took myself to be especially touched by your sermon, as well in regard to the abilities which God hath given me, as in regard of the example which of me He will require. . . . And, therefore, my lord, as you have given me (I thank you) this general exhortation, so direct me, I entreat you, by what particular actions I may this way best discharge my duties." The bishop remained silent, and then, with tears of joy, begged for time to answer the question. After consulting the citizens of London, he returned to the king, who gave the Grey Friars as an hospital for infants, aged, idiots, and cripples; St. Bartholomew for wounded soldiers and sick persons; the Bridewell for the correction of the disorderly; and the hospital of St. Thomas, which he richly endowed: as he signed the instrument he thanked God for prolonging his life to finish the work. The Bishop Ridley was burnt to death in 1555, with Latimer, bishop of Worcester, both being condemned for supporting the reformed religion. Ridley, when brought to the stake, prayed, saying, "O heavenly Father, I give unto Thee most hearty thanks that Thou hast called me to be a professor of Thee even unto death. I beseech Thee,

Lord God, take care of the realm of England, and deliver the same from all her enemies." When the faggots were beginning to burn, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out." Latimer died with the appearance of little suffering, calling upon the Father of heaven to receive his spirit. Ridley, who lingered longer, cried out in bitter agonies, with a loud voice, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;" and "Lord have mercy upon me," till his soul escaped from those who could but "kill the body," and rested in the bosom of his God.

Cranmer had for some time boldly sustained the trials to which he was exposed; he was imprisoned and condemned. Gardiner bid him prepare for execution, but at the same time hinted that the queen might pardon him if he would become a papist again, and renounce his opinions. The fear of death overcame him for the time, and he recanted. The queen, however, had determined that he should die. Before his death he publicly declared against the errors of Rome; he declared that the hand with which he had signed his consent to Romish doctrine should first perish; and when about to be burnt,

he stretched it forth in the flames, crying, "This hand hath offended—this unworthy right hand." He suffered martyrdom in the sixty-seventh year of his age. Between two and three hundred persons perished in the flames in the reign of Queen Mary.

Queen Mary died in 1558, and was succeeded by Queen Elizabeth, when the laws the Church had agreed on in the reigns of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth were restored. The popish bishops, who had been thrust into office by the unjustifiable interference of the Romanists, against the consent of the heads of the English Church, were expelled, and divines holding sound faith ordained in their stead. The clergy generally agreed to these measures, and reviving the true faith, continued in their respective parishes. The thirty-nine articles, which declare against the false doctrines of the Romish Church, were agreed to by the whole body of the clergy; and the people continued for some years "to fear the Lord and reverence His priests." Matthew Parker, who had been remarkable for his zeal in promoting religion, was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury in 1559.

In the time of the persecution Parker had escaped, "lurking secretly in those years within the house of one of his friends; lead-

ing a poor life, without any man's aid or succour, and yet so well contented with his lot, that in that pleasant rest and leisure for his studies, he would never, in respect to himself, have desired any other kind of life, the extreme fear of danger only excepted."¹ And so he continued in safety in those days of bloodshed, being reserved for better times.

His first care, when he became archbishop, was to have the vacant sees filled with pious and learned men, who, as faithful stewards, might take charge of the Church of God.

The queen, in the changes brought about, had recourse to none of those violent and cruel measures adopted by the Romanists. She declared her intentions of dealing favourably with the papists, notwithstanding the cruelty they had exercised towards the Church. She, indeed, steadily refused to allow them to hold benefices, because this would have been to countenance their errors, and to act against the truth. There is one true religion; and the queen, as one who had received that true religion, felt herself bound to prevent the propagation of false creeds. The pope was much irritated at these proceedings; he excommunicated the queen,

¹ Strype, p. 504.

whom he called "the pretended queen of England," and "the servant of wickedness;" and he encouraged the discontented among her subjects to plot against her.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOOKER AND HIS TIMES.

IN the reign of Elizabeth, the celebrated Richard Hooker flourished. He is deservedly respected by the Church as one who “fortified the city against besieging ;” for in the valuable works left behind him, he has provided us with weapons both against Romanist and Dissenter. He was born at Heavytree, near Exeter, 1553. From his childhood he was remarkable for a sweet and serene quietness and modesty, and was so fond of learning, that his schoolmaster persuaded his parents, who intended to make him an apprentice, to let him remain at school, promising to attend with great diligence to his improvement. His parents, and this master, laid a good foundation for his future happiness, “instilling into his soul the seeds of piety ; those conscientious principles of loving and fearing God ; of an early belief that He knows the very secrets of our souls, that He punisheth our vices, and rewards our innocence ; that we should be free from

hypocrisy, and appear to men what we are to God, because, first or last, the crafty man is caught in his own snare." It is a great blessing to be thus brought up from infancy in the peaceful path of innocency and holiness, to remain ignorant concerning that which is evil, with a spirit uncontaminated by the vice of the world, which defiles all who touch it. Yet how many there are who, though blessed with religious instruction, and pursued by the earnest admonitions of those "who watch for their souls," yet plunge, even in the first bloom of childhood, into the abominations of sin, and become, while yet young in days, old and hardened in iniquity!

It is said of Hooker, that the seeds of piety so seasonably planted were continually watered with the dews of God's Holy Spirit, and his infant virtues grew into such holy habits as did make him grow into more favour both with God and man. While he was at the University of Oxford his devotion was so great, that for four years he was but twice absent from the daily prayers. His behaviour there was such as shewed his reverence of God, whom he there worshipped, giving all outward testimonies that his heart was set on heavenly things. He was never known to be discontented, or to murmur against Providence; but he committed

himself with meekness to the will and wisdom of God the Father, bearing with patience each appointed trial. Even in youth, gaiety never led him into unbecoming behaviour or foolish jesting; he was innocent and exemplary. In 1584 he was appointed to the vicarage of Drayton Beauchamp, Buckinghamshire, and was afterwards made master of the Temple. During this time the Puritans troubled the Church with their divisions and complaints, and Hooker did not escape. He was attacked by one of that party, named Travers; but, armed with the armour of righteousness, his enemies could effect nothing against him. In 1595 he was appointed to the vicarage of Bishopsbourne in Kent. Here he laboured, doing the work of an evangelist in all holy simplicity, diligently seeking God by prayer and fasting, and faithfully setting forth the word both in the church and in private instructions; and although celebrated and sought after, yet there was no pride in his manner or appearance: he was humble, and his dress was coarse and plain.

Hooker in his last illness was visited by the pious Dr. Saravia, prebendary of Canterbury, who upon one occasion, shortly before his death, observing him in deep contemplation, inquired what was the subject of his thoughts: he replied, that he was meditating on the

number and nature of the angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; "and, oh, that it might be so on earth. I have lived," said he, "to see this world is made up of perturbations, and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near; and though I have, by His grace, loved Him in my youth, and feared Him in my age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence to Him, and to all men, yet if Thou, Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? and therefore, where I have failed, Lord, shew mercy to me; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, for His merits, who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe Thee a death, Lord, let it not be terrible, and then take Thine own time; I submit to it; let not mine, O Lord, but let Thy will be done." He then fell into a slumber, and awaking once more, said, "God hath heard my daily petitions, for I am at peace with all men, and He is at peace with me; my conscience beareth me this witness, and this witness makes the thoughts of death joyful. I could wish to live to do the Church more service, but cannot hope it; for my days

are past as a shadow that returns not." Thus saying he slept in Jesus.

The Roman Catholics in Hooker's time carried on a most furious persecution against the Protestants. Like the Pharisees, they compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and will justify any iniquity by which the power of their Church may be increased. At Paris no fewer than ten thousand Protestants were by them barbarously and treacherously murdered in cold blood, on the night of the feast of St. Bartholomew, 1572. At the signal of striking a bell at the palace, the Roman Catholics, under the Duc de Guise, commenced a general carnage among the Protestants assembled in that city. The Admiral Coligni, who had been their leader, was then lying in bed, incapable of resistance, having been recently wounded, when he saw a murderer enter his room. He exclaimed, "Young man, spare these grey hairs, and stain them not with blood!" He, however, found no mercy; a sword was plunged into his bosom, and Catherine de Medicis, the king's mother, caused his head to be embalmed, and sent in triumph to Rome. The example of Paris was imitated by Lyons, Rouen, and many other cities in France, where a general slaughter of the Protestants took place. The pope rejoiced when he heard of these horrible deeds; a

public thanksgiving was performed at Rome, and medals were struck to commemorate the event. How different was the spirit of the Church in this land! Prayers were put up both for the persecutors and the persecuted. "Save them, O Lord," was the language of our Church, "who are as sheep appointed to the slaughter. Hear their cry, O Lord, and our prayers for them, and for ourselves. Deliver those that be oppressed; defend those that be in fear of cruelty; relieve them that be in misery, and comfort all that be in sorrow and heaviness, that by Thy aid and strength they and we may obtain surety from our enemies without shedding of Christian and innocent blood. And for that, O Lord, Thou hast commanded us to pray for our enemies, we do beseech Thee not only to abate their pride, and to stay the cruelty and fury of such as either of malice or ignorance do persecute them which put their trust in Thee, but also to mollify their hard hearts, to open their blind eyes, and to enlighten their ignorant minds, that they may see and understand, and truly turn unto Thee."

You may remember how in former times the papal cause was aided by mendicant or begging friars, who, wherever they went, fought the pope's battles, and endeavoured to extend his power. The Church of Rome was at this time assisted in the same manner

by a new order, called the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. This order was founded by Ignatius Loyola. This remarkable man entered the army in his youth; but having broken his leg in the siege of Pampeluna, 1521, he determined to devote himself to God. He began to preach, and to gather disciples, who took a vow that they would observe his rules, and assumed the name I have mentioned. The pope gave his sanction to the order; and Ignatius Loyola was by him created first general, 1546. The Society of Jesuits was employed in the defence of the Church of Rome, in the education of children, and in the dissemination of Christianity among the heathen. They were a powerful body, being in perfect obedience and discipline under their general; and they were devoted to the service of the pope, binding themselves by an oath to go wherever he should send them. They were perfectly unscrupulous by what means they gained their ends; deceit and falsehood were considered no crimes, if employed to serve the pope. By men of this school the ignorant of England were told it was lawful to depose their queen. Their object was to place Mary queen of Scots, a papist, on the English throne, that under her Romanism might again be revived. Many plots were laid to bring about this event: a book was

written by a Jesuit, in which the English ladies about Queen Elizabeth's person were exhorted to destroy her. These schemes were, however, discovered, and the hopes of the party were defeated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ANDREWES AND HIS TIMES.

ANDREWES became bishop of Winchester in the reign of James I., who succeeded to the throne upon the death of Queen Elizabeth. In her reign Andrewes was dean of Westminster; and in his superintendence of Westminster school he shewed that sweet disposition which has been admired by his contemporaries. He was very diligent to keep the scholars there to their studies, and would allow no loitering and idleness; yet it seems that his gentleness and kindness taught them to love their books; for he used no compulsion or correction, and seldom was heard to speak with severity. He had given much time to the study of religion, and had made himself acquainted with the writings of those early fathers, of some of whom an account has been given in the former part of this book. He was therefore well able to defend the faith of the English Church, which also he did with much success, convincing many Roman Catholics, and bring-

ing them back from their errors. He was remarkable for his princely charity, for he freely and liberally bestowed his goods in alms whenever the glory of God was to be promoted, or want and sorrow alleviated. Many good men, who were well acquainted with him, wished to see him at the head of the Church in England; for they thought prosperity would be ensured by the guidance of such a man: in his holiness and piety he resembled one of those bishops who lived near the times of the apostles. King James had a high opinion of his learning, and found him a very powerful supporter of the faith of the Church, which was exposed to some attacks in those days, both from the Romanists and Puritans.

James I. came to the throne in 1603. From him the Roman Catholics hoped to find patronage, but in this they were disappointed. James declared his resolution to adhere to the laws enacted against them, and to support the Church, as restored under Edward VI. and Elizabeth. The Romanists therefore determined to make a desperate effort to destroy the English Church, and to set up their religion on its ruins. It has been already said, that any measures by which the Romish power was to be increased found supporters among its adherents at that time, and were considered lawful by them.

Being thus unscrupulous, the papists contrived the horrible plot of murdering King James, and all the members of both houses of parliament. They hoped thus to destroy the English Church, and to gain possession of the country. This scheme was first broached by Robert Catesby, a gentleman of good fortune, and a Romanist. Guy Fawkes, an officer in the Spanish service, was engaged to fire a train of gunpowder so as to blow up the king and the parliament-house, with all the members there assembled. In this foul conspiracy they were encouraged by Garnet, one of those Jesuits before mentioned. The house adjoining the house of parliament was hired by the conspirators. Upon boring a hole under the parliament-house they discovered vaults full of coal; these coals they purchased, and conveyed into the vaults thirty-six barrels of gunpowder, which they carefully concealed. All things were prepared, and the conspirators were on the eve of performing the deadly work, when one of the number—for there were twenty—wishing to save his friend, Lord Monteagle, wrote him a letter, entreating him not to go to the house that night. The letter was laid before the king, who happily suspected some plot, and commanded that a watch should be set in the vault. About midnight a man was seen dressed in

a cloak and boots, and carrying a dark lantern in his hand; this was Guy Fawkes, who had just been preparing the train to take fire the next morning. He was seized, and the plot frustrated. This happened on the 5th of November, 1605. The anniversary of this day is still made a day of rejoicing; bonfires are lighted, and Guy Fawkes is burnt in effigy. A form of prayer was also appointed, in which the Church still preserves a remembrance of God's mercy, in "delivering King James and the three estates of England from the most traitorous and bloody intended massacre by gunpowder."

George Herbert lived in the times of Bishop Andrewes, who valued him highly, as he well deserved from the great piety and holiness of his life; and Andrewes always carried a letter, which Herbert had written him, in his bosom. He was also known to and admired by King James. Upon the death of that monarch, he resolved to enter the ministry. Some of his acquaintances endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose; for these worldly-wise friends told him that a person of his great talents and high birth ought to seek a more exalted station than that which belongs to a clergyman; but he answered them by saying, "It hath formerly been judged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest

families on earth ; and though the iniquities of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable, by consecrating all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God who gave them, knowing I can never do too much for Him who hath done so much for me as to make me a Christian." He became prebend of Layton Ecclesia: the church of his parish was in a wretched state ; it had been suffered to fall into such ruin, that the parishioners were unable to attend divine service there. Those who had ever thought of repairing it, had been discouraged in the work by the difficulties attending it ; and for twenty years it had been crumbling away, when Herbert, whose zeal was not so easily cooled, resolved to put his hand to the work. His mother, hearing of his project, was fearful so great an undertaking would involve him in trouble and anxiety. She therefore sent to him, advising that he should abandon the project, for it would not do for his weak body and empty purse to undertake to build churches ; but he answered, for once he must be an undutiful son, for he had made a vow to God that if he were able, he would build that church. By the alms of good people, and by his own exertions, this house of God was

at length restored, and became remarkable for its beauty. He also repaired the church of Bemerton, near Salisbury, which living he afterwards held, and he rebuilt the parsonage-house there.

We are told that Herbert was always exceedingly kind to the poor ; and we may see how good and gentle he was by a little anecdote which is related of him. Once, as he was on his way to his parish, he was met by a poor old woman in great distress, who desired to lay her wants and sorrows before him, as the minister of her parish ; but when she came up to Herbert, she was quite unable, from fear and shortness of breath, to state her case. Herbert perceiving this, used great tenderness towards her ; taking her by the hand, he said, " Speak, good mother ; be not afraid to speak to me, for I am a man that will hear you with patience, and will relieve your necessities too, if I be able, and this I will do willingly ; and therefore, mother, be not afraid to acquaint me with what you desire." He supplied her wants ; and his wife also, who was a good lady, on hearing of the poor woman's poverty, sent her a pair of blankets, and promised further succour.

Herbert was very charitable and good among his parishioners, and very active and earnest in teaching them their faith and their duty, and, though always of a very

delicate constitution, and constantly suffering from illness, yet he every day had two services in his church; and his people and some of the neighbouring gentry attended them, and, like the Christians of early times, honoured God by offering a daily sacrifice of public prayer. Some of the poor labourers would leave their work and go to church, and then return to their plough, or to whatever business they might have been engaged in.

Herbert had a great love for the prayers of the Church of England; and once, shortly before his death, being asked what prayers he desired to have offered up, he chose those of the Church; for he said no prayers were equal to them. He was very anxious that his people should understand them, that they might join in the service with the spirit and understanding; therefore he explained to them the meaning of them, and the reason for their arrangement.

The morning service begins with some sentences from the Bible, chosen as they contain God's invitation to penitent sinners; then follows the exhortation, in which the congregation is exhorted to obey those Scriptures, and acknowledge and bewail their sins and wickedness; after this is the confession, for, as Herbert taught, it is reasonable we begin by confessing ourselves to be miserable

sinners, and we begin so because, till we have confessed ourselves to be such, we are not capable of that mercy which we acknowledge we need, and pray for. After this, the priest reads the absolution, in which he declares God's pardon to the penitent; and having in the Lord's Prayer begged forgiveness for those sins which we have confessed, we desire the Lord to open our lips, that our mouth may shew forth His praise, and proceed with the other prayers and praises appointed.

He explained the reason for constantly repeating the Psalms; namely, that they contain a thankful repetition of God's past mercies: therefore we honour God by often and publicly repeating them. He also shewed that the Church had ordered the Lord's Prayer to be often repeated, as it is in every full service, because it was composed and commanded by Jesus Christ, who made it, and because it is "a perfect pattern for our less perfect forms, and therefore fittest to sum up and conclude all our imperfect petitions."

Herbert wrote some religious letters and beautiful poetry, which are very much read and admired in these days.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PURITANS.

IN the reign of King James the Puritans raised many complaints against the Church. This sect arose in England in this way. In the reign of Queen Mary, who was a bigoted papist, and a violent persecutor of the reformers, many of the English Church, to save their lives, took refuge in Germany; this was in 1554. Here some congregations performed divine worship according to the rites of the English Church, as settled in the reign of Edward VI. Others fell into the novelties of some modern reformers, who with hasty zeal to depart from every thing belonging to, or followed by, the Romish Church, had also departed from many apostolical and catholic customs. Those who followed the Church were called Conformists, because they conformed to, or observed, the forms of the Church; those who departed from her practices were called Nonconformists, or persons who do not conform. These were also called Puritans, because they reck-

oned themselves purer than the Church. These men with all their new ideas returned to England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the Church had peace. The queen, however, was not disposed to favour these novelties. The Church of England had taken the institutions of Christ, the example of the apostles, and the practices of the first and purest ages, as a guide; and at the reformation cast not off all that was old, but cleansed the Church from those weeds that had sprung up around her, and retained those goodly ornaments with which the holy of old had adorned her. When this had been done deliberately, and by the wisest in the nation, the subjects of the queen were called upon to join in this one Church and one form, by the act called the Act of Uniformity, by which all were bound to submit to the Church as governed by the queen, its visible head on earth. The Puritans refused their assent to this; they still complained there was too much of popery. It would have been difficult to satisfy all of this party; for having cast off authority, and being guided by individual judgment, it was not easy to say where they might stop. Some demanded that all the work of the reformation should be destroyed; that the Church should be entirely remodelled, and made like one established by a reformer named Calvin, at Geneva. Others

only required to be allowed to carry on their own worship as they would. The queen, anxious for the unity of the Church, would not countenance these divisions, and the Puritans separated.

The vestments worn by the clergy in the execution of their sacred functions formed one ground of objection against the Church in the opinion of the Puritans. The white robe worn by clergymen is called surplice; it comes from the Latin word *superpellicium*, which means "over skins;" and it is said to have been so called, because it was formerly worn over leather coats made of the skins of beasts, to represent that the offence of our first parents, which brought us under the necessity of wearing skins, was now hid and covered by the grace of Christ, and that therefore we are clothed with the white robe of innocence. We find under the law, the Jewish priests wore decent sacred vestments at all times, see Exodus xxviii. 2-9. It was also the custom of the primitive Church, as appears from the writings of the early Christians. The white colour is suitable to the ministers of righteousness; the Levites and singers were arrayed in "white linen" (2 Chron. v. 12). Those who objected to these vests as being popish (for some of the Puritans called the surplice "a rag of popery") were objecting to a custom appointed

under God in the Jewish Church, and followed by the Church of Christ in the earliest ages. The hood, also worn by the clergy, was taken from the custom of the earliest monks and retired persons, who wore hoods to cover their faces, and as a protection in cold and wet weather. Afterwards hoods were used by the members of the cathedral churches and colleges; and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge use them, to denote the different degrees among their members, so that the standing or degree obtained by each may be publicly known. The Church therefore enjoins that all members of the Universities should wear their proper hoods during service; a peculiar robe, called a *rochette*, is also worn by bishops, according to the ancient custom. However, the Puritans felt scruples on these subjects.

The ancient form of government by bishops was also condemned by that party: they maintained that all the ministers of the gospel should be equal. Bancroft, archbishop of Canterbury, combated these opinions, insisting upon the authority of bishops, as of those appointed by Christ to take care of the Church of God (1 Tim. iii. 5), as a distinct order; all ministers of the gospel who are not ordained by bishops being irregularly invested with the sacred character, and having in fact no authority in the Church. The

Puritans also declared against the magnificence of our ancient cathedral churches; yet as God has no where revealed that "it is His delight to dwell beggarly," we may safely follow the example of the holy men of old, who built spacious and handsome churches throughout every city, and beheld with joy "the sumptuous stateliness of houses built unto God's glory."¹ The Puritans objected to church music, to bowing the head in honour of Jesus' holy name, to the solemn days and saints' days of the Church, and to the use of the sign of the cross in baptism. To explain this primitive custom, it may be observed, that masters and generals in old times used to mark their servants and soldiers on the forehead or hands in order to know them; and it was the ancient practice of the Church to sign with the cross those who were soldiers and servants of Christ.

Against the liturgy of the Church many complaints were raised. To prescribe a form of prayer, the Puritans said, was to stop the course of God's Spirit; they therefore preferred to the ancient prayers used for many hundreds of years by the holy Church, the extempore effusions of their ministers, considering these unpremeditated addresses to the Deity the outpourings of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Hooker.

CHAPTER XXX.

LAUD AND HIS TIMES.

LAUD became archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Charles the First. Both the king and this archbishop were conscientiously attached to the Church of England, and devoutly convinced of her truth and purity. They constantly defended her as the chosen of God, and the glory of the land. The clergy generally at this time were men of talent, learning, and sound piety. This fair morning was, however, succeeded by a cloudy and stormy day. The power of the kings had been great in this country in earlier times. King Charles had been educated to consider it his duty to maintain and preserve a high degree of authority; and although beloved by his subjects for his many great virtues, yet he was opposed in the exercise of his power. The people resolved to limit the claims of their kings, and no longer to submit to the ancient prerogative of the crown; this led to a contest between Charles and the parliament. The opposition to the king was further increased by the prevalence of Puritanism,

which had spread over the kingdom, and made unhappy divisions in the Church. The body of the Puritans split into innumerable parties, so many and so various, that names for half of them are scarcely to be found. One of the most considerable of these sects was formed by Robert Brown, a man of very unsettled views; he had formed new and strange notions on the nature of the Church, and the form of its government. He divided the faithful into separate bodies or congregations; maintaining that such a number of persons as could be contained in a place of worship was a Church, and enjoyed all the rights and privileges of an ecclesiastical community; these small congregations were called independent. The power of governing the congregation was not given to bishops, as in the Church, but was in the people, each member enjoying an equal share in its direction; thus, all matters of doctrine and discipline were left to the majority; the preachers were elected from the body, but were removed when they ceased to satisfy their hearers; they had no distinction or authority, only were to preach and pray, which any member who considered himself competent was also allowed to do. The founder, Brown, eventually renounced these opinions, and, taking orders, held a living in the Church. The sect afterwards divided; and John Robin-

son, altering Brown's plan in some respects, formed a body whose principles are still to be found among the Independents of the present day.

It is impossible to give even the names of all the sects who now beset the Church, departing farther and farther from divine truth. Among these were the Unitarians, who deny the divinity of the Saviour, and, like the heathens, make religion to consist in mere morality. There were also the Presbyterians, who desired to have the Church governed by clergymen chosen by the people, and to have extempore prayer: the Levellers, who would submit to no ruler, declaring they would have no king, master, or general but Christ; they held that all men were equal, and that property should be equally divided among them. In those days religion was made to consist in listening to sermons. Preaching only was valued; sacraments were lightly esteemed; and prayer, "so exquisite and profitable a duty if duly performed," was accounted the least part of religion.

Archbishop Laud, whose earnest desire it was that these never enough to be lamented distractions in the Church might be happily composed to the glory of God, used his utmost endeavour to restore unity; by this he drew down on himself the hatred of the sects, and the people were artfully taught to

believe that the archbishop and king Charles were the supporters of Romanism. The parliament, under the influence of puritanical principles, set their king and the laws at defiance. After persecuting the clergy, they at last brought the archbishop Laud to trial; he was imprisoned for more than two years, and then most unlawfully beheaded. He endured with all the noble patience of one who dies in a righteous cause: "I know," said he, "my God whom I serve is as able to deliver me from this sea of blood as He was to deliver the Three Children from the furnace; and (I humbly thank my Saviour for it) my resolution is now, as theirs was then; they would not worship the image the king had set up, nor will I the imaginations which the people are setting up, nor will I forsake the temple, and the truth of God, to follow the bleating of Jeroboam's calves in Dan and Bethel. And as for this people, they are at this day miserably misled (God of His mercy open their eyes, that they may see the right way!), for the blind lead the blind; and if they go on, both will certainly fall into the ditch." In an humble and beautiful prayer, uttered a little before his death, Laud called upon God to look upon the miserable state of the kingdom, and to preserve "this poor Church in her truth, peace, and patrimony."

The tyrannical rulers were not yet satis-

fied with this shameful murder. After open rebellion, by which the nation endured all the horrors of civil war, the king himself, being deprived of all power, was brought to a mock trial; he was condemned, and beheaded on the 30th of January, 1649. A total alteration of the ceremonies of the Church took place. The liturgy was abolished by the Puritans, and a directory for public prayer set up in its stead: this directory contains not a form of prayer, but is a mere direction for the service, leaving all to the minister; the prayers were to be such as he might choose to use; burials were to be performed without any religious ceremony; all holydays were to be abolished, and no directions were given in these services for the introduction of either the Lord's Prayer, the ten commandments, or the creed. The Puritans, who exclaimed against the wealth of the clergy, had robbed the Church of her property, dividing among themselves the spoils; they scrupled not to hold their unlawfully acquired possessions while the clergy, to whom they justly belonged, were left by them to starve, or to be reduced with their families to extreme poverty.

The cathedral churches were now threatened with destruction by the furious fanatics, who, having overturned authorities, now raged triumphant.

Lord Brooke, a leader of the party, said he hoped to see the day when "not one stone of St. Paul's Cathedral should be left upon another." These noble structures were most impiously profaned. Oftentimes they were used as stables for the soldiers' horses. In some churches, the sectaries would baptise pigs, horses, and calves; mocking the holy mysteries of Christ's religion, and leading the ignorant to look on them with contempt. Tombs were broken open, and the bodies of the dead torn up and scattered about. The Archbishop Parker before mentioned was one whose ashes were not allowed to remain undisturbed. His monument was thrown down, that one Scot, who had possession of the chapel in which it stood, might convert it into a hall. The lead of the archbishop's coffin was sold, and his body dragged forth and cast upon a dunghill. At Sudley the chancel was made a slaughter-house, and carcases were cut up on the communion-table. At Westminster the soldiers sat drinking and smoking over the altar. No cathedral escaped the destructive fury of these wild fanatics. The works of consecrated genius, which piety had laid up in the temple of the Lord, the dissenters delighted to tear up and destroy; beautiful painted windows were broken; statues pulled down from their niches and mutilated, as we still find

many in the cathedrals. The clergy could not be induced to take part in these evil works, nor join with those who, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, rose in rebellion against their ecclesiastical rulers; though ruin awaited them, yet were they faithful to their trust, taking patiently the spoiling of their goods. Seven thousand of the ministers of the Church chose rather to give up their livings than to defile their hands with these unholy deeds. Thus were they turned out to starve. Many perished from the barbarous treatment they experienced, and some were murdered. "The priests of Zion sighed, because her gates were desolate."

In these times lived Nicholas Ferrar, a holy deacon of the Church. Like Hooker, he was educated in the paths of piety and virtue. He was grave, mild, and tender-hearted; even in youth he disliked all vain pomp and show, wearing a simple and plain dress. After taking orders, he retired with his family to Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire, which became a small Protestant monastery. The parish church, which had been suffered to go to decay, was repaired by Ferrar's mother, a pious and holy woman. He was very diligent in instructing the children in the neighbourhood, and they were every Sunday entertained by the religious society. The members of the society were constantly

employed in holy exercises ; rising at four in the morning, at five they attended prayers, at six they said psalms for an hour, and passed the day in religious employments ; their leisure hours were employed in instructing the poor, and in ministering to their necessities. King Charles I. had a great respect for Ferrar, and visited his society more than once. It was persecuted and dispersed at the Rebellion by the Presbyterians and Independents. Ferrar died 1637.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HAMMOND AND HIS TIMES.

HENRY HAMMOND was born at Chertsey, in Surrey, 1605. He was one of those who, in the time of the Rebellion, adhered faithfully to the Church and king. He was so eminent a saint, that it has been said of him, that "God had raised him up in these latter days, that we might not disbelieve the history of the excellency of the primitive Christians," since from his character we have the proof of the possibility of attaining a high degree of holiness. From a child, his sweet and religious temper smiled forth on all around. When at school he never engaged in any quarrels or fights, and would retire in play-time to pray to God in secret. He applied with great industry to his studies, and made himself well acquainted with divinity and those things which relate to the Church. He was ordained in 1629, and afterwards became rector of Penshurst, in Kent. Here he provided the inhabitants with the privilege of daily public prayers; for he performed the

service every day in the week, and twice on Saturdays and holyday-eves, and would never resign this duty to others. His family gave the example of constant attendance; for his mother, by whom it was guided, was a religious woman, and Hammond always shewed her great respect.

His custom was, to spend an hour before evening prayers in catechising the young; the Church Catechism was selected for this purpose, and as the elder members of the congregation were present, they also acquired much knowledge from it; for Hammond, by his explanations, made it easy for the simplest to understand; and he observed this exercise to be very improving, and thought his people derived as much good from it as from listening to sermons.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered once a month, and the offerings of the congregation were so abundant, that the poor were easily relieved, and a sum of money was set aside for apprenticing the children of necessitous parents; at the same time, relief was afforded to other parishes. Hammond himself loved to give alms; and he would say, "How merciful it is of God to reward the performance of that which is in itself so pleasant!" His compassionate charity flowed forth wherever want and misery called for help. During that period of suf-

fering which succeeded the martyrdom of King Charles, and the persecution of the Church, persons were employed by Hammond to seek out the wretched, that his bounty might relieve them. The wives and children of clergymen who had been driven from their houses, and banished their country, often found a friend and protector in this holy man. Nor was he contented with this. A considerable sum he yearly sent to the clergy who had been driven to seek refuge in other lands. He was enabled to perform all this kindness from accustoming himself to little expense; for it was said of him, that himself was the only person he denied. He valued little the distinctions of birth and riches, considering of how much more value the soul is than the body. This consideration made him diligently visit the poor and afflicted; he would often see such daily; for he said it was a glorious thing, and a rich prize, if, at the expense of a man's whole life, he was made instrumental in rescuing one soul. When he observed his sermons failed to produce the effects he desired on the lives of the hearers, he felt grieved, and would lay the blame on himself, and seek to be more persuasive and simple.

Such holiness and piety as we observe in Hammond are only to be produced by the working of God's Spirit abundantly shed

forth in the heart ; and that he constantly rested upon God, we learn from the frequency of his prayers ; his regular and appointed times exceeded David's "seven times a day." As soon as he was ready, which was early, for he seldom rose later than six o'clock, he prayed in his chamber with his servant, in a peculiar form composed for that purpose. After this, he retired to his secret devotions in his closet. Between ten and eleven, he used a solemn intercession, in which he besought God's pardon and mercy to the distracted country and persecuted Church. Soon after this came the public service. In the afternoon he had another hour of private prayer, which on Sunday he enlarged, and so religiously observed, that if by accident any circumstance interfered with it, he devoted the time usually past in supper, that his prayers might not be curtailed. About five o'clock, the solemn prayers for the nation, and the evening service at the Church, returned. At bed-time, his private prayers were again offered ; and even midnight was not without its service, for he then often repeated the 51st Psalm. His devotions were those of a Catholic Christian, for all sorts and conditions of men were prayed for by him ; and even his enemies were not forgotten—he

daily entreated God to forgive and bless them also.

Those who knew him were astonished at the labours he accomplished; for he wrote many large and learned works, endeavouring, by his doctrines, to point out to the sinful and rebellious nation that they had departed from God, and were following their own imaginations; and when those who usurped the power of ruling forbid the clergy to minister to the people, he was bitterly afflicted. He beheld in this God's punishment on the country, and felt that he also partook of it for his former unprofitableness, and was sentenced to give up what was the joy of his life, his services in the house of God. He also shewed the same spirit of humility in sickness: upon the approach of any illness, his first inquiry was, by what failing he had provoked his present calamity. He prayed God to shew him his sin, and to remove it. Then he would deliver himself up, as an obedient child, into the hand of God—a merciful Father, to do with him what should seem to Him good.

The prince Charles, the son of the King Charles who had been beheaded, made some ineffectual efforts to gain possession of his crown. The people, trampled on by the lawless usurpers of power, were afraid to de-

clare in his favour ; his army was defeated, and he himself narrowly escaped by disguising himself : for this purpose he had his hair cut off, and worked for some days in cutting faggots in a wood. Upon another occasion, being pursued by his enemies, he escaped by climbing a spreading oak, where he remained concealed, while he heard the voices of the soldiers who were in search of him below. In memory of this occurrence, it is common to display branches of oak on the 29th of May, the anniversary of the restoration. At last Charles was obliged to quit his kingdom ; and on the way to the sea-coast he was again near being discovered. He had put up at an inn, where some fanatical preacher had taken upon himself to assemble a congregation, to whom he was delivering an ignorant and disloyal discourse ; the king, to avoid suspicion, joined the audience ; and while he was there, the smith, examining the shoes of the horses of the inn, declared that Charles's was a north country horse, for he knew it by the shoes. Charles had been in Scotland, so the smith was right ; and his assertion created a suspicion that the stranger was no other than the prince. A constable was accordingly sent for by the preacher ; but before he arrived, Charles had escaped. At length he made good his retreat to Normandy, in France.

England now became a prey to various contending bodies of dissenters. Change followed change, yet no change brought peace and stability. Cromwell, who had encouraged the people in murdering their king and in laying waste the Church, was declared Protector of the Commonwealth of England. He used the utmost endeavours to repress the fanaticism his hand had helped to unchain. He saw too late the beauty and utility of those restraining powers ordained of God; and in the latter days of his unquiet life he would gladly have restored monarchy and episcopacy. After his death, which took place in 1658, eighteen months of confusion made the nation impatient of the tyranny they had chosen; and Charles, who had so narrowly escaped from the country, was gladly received as king. The anniversary of his return is observed, and a form of thanksgiving is appointed, by which the Church preserves a remembrance of God's mercy in having put an end to the great rebellion, and in restoring the royal family to the throne. This event took place on the 29th of May, 1660. The Church was thus delivered from persecution, and continued to prosper exceedingly. Hammond, who, in the late troubles, had suffered much for his fidelity to his king, and who had been severely affected by his violent death, was now offered

the bishopric of Worcester ; but his health had been long giving way, and he died before he was preferred to it.

The king was himself careless in religion ; yet the clergy of that period were learned and religious men, whose munificence in charity, ability in preaching, and righteous consistency, made them respected and powerful in working good.

CHAPTER XXXII.

KEN AND HIS TIMES.

KEN, of whose exalted virtue and unbending integrity history contains so many proofs, had been chaplain to King Charles II. The favour of this gay and thoughtless monarch, so likely to lead a yielding mind into inconsistent and ungodly concessions, was no stumbling-block to Ken; he always remembered whose servant he was, and he first listened to the voice of God, and obeyed Him rather than man. King Charles, though opposed in his wayward vices, admired this constant righteousness, and appointed Ken bishop of Bath and Wells. He was also attended on his death-bed by this bishop, who waited on him with great anxiety and earnestness, and is said to have spoken with great elevation of thought and expression, like a man inspired. He lived in trying times; for James II., who succeeded to the throne in 1685, discovered a strong inclination towards Romanism, and attempted to bring *the Church* to popery. In order to accom-

plish this, he encouraged the dissenters, with a view to making them instrumental in the overthrow of the Church. These sectarians, after separating from the Church, because it had not sufficiently departed from the Church of Rome to satisfy them, and at a time when there was little danger of the prevalence of popery, yet raised no helping hand against popery in the day when princes and powers were combined to establish it, but left the clergy to fight the battle alone. Happily the clergy were equal to the struggle; they stood as a valiant guard to defend the holy faith of their beloved Church. When therefore the king, by an unlawful stretch of power, was for placing all creeds on an equal footing, and required the clergy to read his declaration for liberty of conscience from their pulpits, they felt that the hour had arrived when fidelity to the Church required that they should make a stand. Sancroft, archbishop of Canterbury, assembled the clergy in London; who, after calling on God for aid, drew up a petition to the king, in which they entreated him to desist from these measures. This petition was signed by Sancroft the archbishop, Ken, Lloyd bishop of St. Asaph, and five other bishops. These presented the petition to the king, who was much enraged with them for opposing his scheme. Ken spoke as a dutiful

subject and a faithful Churchman, saying, in answer to James's repeated commands that the declaration should be read, "We are bound to fear God, and honour the king: we desire to do both,—we will honour you, we must fear God." Although the king had testified his displeasure against those who thus resisted his measures, yet the clergy were not intimidated; they continued, as far as they were able, to preserve the laws and religion as established at the Reformation. The bishops were committed to the Tower; and the people, who looked on them as bold champions in a godly cause, hastened in crowds to see them on their way to their place of confinement. Many knelt to implore their blessing, and at the same time prayed that a blessing might rest on them in this hour of trial. Even the soldiers and officers, to whose care they were committed, knelt before them, and implored their benediction; they, the while, in meek consistency, exhorted the people to fear God and honour the king, and to maintain their loyalty. The 29th of June was the day fixed on for their trial. They were pronounced not guilty by the jury; it was decided that the king, in ordering the declaration of liberty of conscience to be read, had acted contrary to those laws enacted to prevent the spread of false religions in the kingdom; and the

bishops, in resisting this unlawful measure, had done their duty. Sancroft the archbishop, whose heart trembled for the Church, warned the people of their danger, sending, through the bishops, admonitions to the clergy to "teach and inform the people that all usurped and foreign jurisdiction had been, for most just causes, taken away and abolished in this realm;" and to caution them against all seducers, and especially against persons sent from the pope, who were now in great numbers gone forth, more busy and active than ever; and to impress upon them that it was not enough for them to be members of an excellent Church, rightly and duly reformed both in faith and worship, unless they reformed and amended their own lives, and so ordered their conversation in all things as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

The king, by his popish measures, and continued efforts in favour of the Church of Rome, lost the affections and confidence of his subjects—a rebellion broke out—and he was driven from the throne in 1689. William Prince of Orange, who had married the king's daughter Mary, shared with her the English throne. Five bishops, and four hundred of the clergy, however, still considered James, though banished, the lawful king, and they therefore refused to take the oath of allegiance. They were called Non-

jurors, or persons who would not swear, and were consequently deprived of their bishoprics. The bishops were Ken, the Archbishop Sancroft, and three of the seven who had resisted the arbitrary measures of James, and maintained the cause of the Church. This Bishop Ken was the author of the manual of prayers for young persons, originally composed for Winchester school, where he himself was educated.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WILSON AND HIS TIMES.

THOMAS WILSON was born at Burton, in Cheshire, 1663; he was educated in the University of Dublin. It was his intention to practise medicine in that city. He was, however, persuaded to enter the ministry; and it is well he was thus induced to change his profession, for his elevated character fitted him well for the sacred office. At his first curacy, which was in Lancashire, he shewed that earnest diligence which afterwards made him so useful in the Church, and that liberality in almsgiving for which he was remarkable. Though the income derived from his curacy was very small, amounting to only thirty pounds a year, yet he was careful to be faithful over that little committed to him, and he dedicated a tenth to God's service. In 1689 he was ordained priest; upon this occasion he was more than ever deeply impressed with the nature of that holy engagement before God by which he became the author-

ised minister of His word and sacraments, and he resolved to devote himself entirely to His service. His most religious life proves that this resolution passed not away like the morning dew, but was made deliberately, and kept constantly. The fame of his excellence spread abroad; and the Earl of Derby selected him as a fit person to whom he might commit the education of his son, Lord Strange, and as his private chaplain. The appointment of the Bishop of Sodor and Man belonged to this nobleman; and, on the death of the bishop, Lord Derby offered this preferment to Wilson, who thankfully acknowledged the honour, yet declined the post, for he thought himself unworthy of so important an office, and incapable of performing rightly the duties belonging to it. The Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom his eminent virtues were well known, hearing that he declined it from a sense of his unworthiness, and from a dread of incurring so heavy a responsibility, would not accept his refusal; and at last Wilson yielded, and, as he said, was forced into the bishopric. He laboured with unwearied zeal in the vineyard of the Lord, and studied to promote godliness and pure religion, by his labours, his preaching, and the example of a spotless life. The diocese was in a very neglected state when he came to it; he spared neither

exertion nor expense in bringing about a change; and although the revenue of the bishopric amounted to only 300*l.* a year, he rebuilt the ruined palace, erected a chapel, established libraries in the different parishes, and relieved most freely the distressed among the poor. He was himself quite content with what he had, and declined the offer of a good living, because he thought it impossible to give due attention to two charges; and, upon a later occasion, when a richer bishopric was offered, he refused this also, for he was unwilling to leave those among whom he must have felt as a father and guide. No part of his diocese was neglected; he was seen every where ministering both to the temporal and spiritual wants of the inhabitants.

As his income grew larger, his alms continued to increase. He always set aside what he intended for the poor in a particular place, which he called the "poor's drawer;" here he first laid by a tenth part of his income, afterwards a fifth, then, still enlarging his charity, a third, and, finally, half of his goods were given to the poor. His dwelling was a refuge where the afflicted and the destitute could tell their sorrows, and find sympathy and help, for his hand was ever ready to scatter comfort around, and "the blessing of him that was ready to perish" came upon

him. In his barn, a stock of corn and meal for the poor was laid up, and orders were given that full measures should be dealt out to them. He was truly an apostolic bishop; and it was said, that if the ancient discipline of the Church were lost, it might be found in all its purity in his diocese. He took great pains to provide zealous clergymen; and with this view he carefully guided the studies, and watched the conduct, of those who intended offering themselves for ordination, and frequently wrote to his clergy excellent letters of advice and direction: he was respected and beloved by them as a wise and faithful steward. Like other eminent saints of whom we read, we find Wilson unceasingly called upon God in prayer; every morning at six o'clock, and in the evening, he joined his family in devotional exercises; three times a day he retired to pray in secret; in the night his song of thanksgiving was poured forth. "I will arise at midnight, and give thanks unto Thee;" or, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name;" and sometimes he was overheard saying the psalm used in the morning service, "We praise Thee, O God! we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."

Wilson was ever labouring to restore discipline, and to act up to those strict duties

and regulations by which the Church of Christ was preserved from the pollutions of the world. Upon finding the wife of the governor of the island had been guilty of spreading slanderous stories, he forbid her the sacrament, desiring her first to acknowledge her fault, and then to come. A clergyman, however, in defiance of this, admitted her; for this act of disobedience the bishop suspended him. The governor was much irritated and enraged, and ordered that the bishop should be seized, and cast into prison, where he remained, with two of his clergy, in a damp, gloomy dungeon for two months. The inhabitants were indignant at seeing their pastor treated in this lawless manner; they rose in a large body, and would have pulled down the governor's house, had they not been prevented by the bishop, who, from the grated window of his prison, exhorted them to peace and submission. Wilson was at last released by an appeal to the king. The people hailed the day when he was set free with great joy. A multitude extending for three miles scattered flowers before his feet, and celebrated his return with music and loud rejoicing. The latter days of this servant of God passed away in calmness and peace, while he prepared, with much humility, for "the glory which shall be revealed."

In Wilson's time the sect called the Methodists arose. Their principles were first established by John Wesley, born 1703. He appears to have been a good man, and it is deeply to be lamented that in his efforts to spread a knowledge of Christian truth, he was unmindful of the command of the Lord, that the Church should be one; that he rebelled against the authority given by Christ to the heads of that Church, and refused to be guided by the regulations established by them, as most in accordance with the Scriptures, and approved of by an innumerable company of departed saints, as most likely to produce lasting good: he followed rather his own inclinations, and trusted to his own opinions. Instead, therefore, of labouring as a clergyman of the Church, in the particular field appointed to him, and striving there, through evil report and good report, by long unwearied continuance in well-doing, to build up a people in faith and holiness, he pursued a course much more easy to impatient and imperfect man; he travelled about as he would, preaching in fields and in places where his great name for eloquence attracted a multitude, which, as we know, is easily drawn forth when any new thing is to be heard or seen. Thus he interfered in the parishes of other clergy, among persons over whom he had no autho-

rity,—a course destructive to love, decency, and to the growth of true religion. Thousands of persons, who had not yet learnt from their Bibles the command to avoid those who cause divisions, were led by Wesley into the sin of schism, accounting it a small matter to despise a Church which God has appointed, and to set at nought the clergy whom He has chosen as His ambassadors. The followers of Wesley, carried on by the spirit of the times, which leads so many to prefer their own inventions to all other things, whether of God or of man, have departed still farther from the “good old ways,” and have kept up and increased these disastrous divisions, which must call forth the tears and the prayers of the faithful.

Since the time of Wilson no great event has occurred in the Church. There are many others among the bishops and clergy of the English Church over whose holy lives one would love to linger ; but the limits assigned for this little book will not allow the mention of them. The object has been, by the simple statement of a few facts, to remind the younger members of the English branch of the Catholic Church that they are, by God’s unmerited mercy, “no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God . . . built upon the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord (Ephes. ii. 19, 20, 21).



Winchester School, see p. 220.

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